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The Editors
DR. REAGAN'S ORDERS, INTO EL QUAGMIRE

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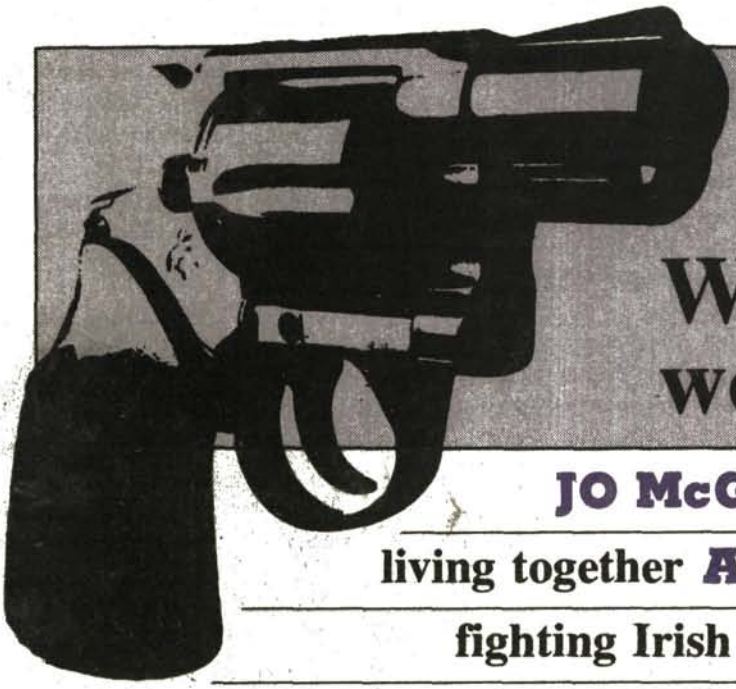

It's trickier than people think

DON B. KATES

Why gun control won't work

JO McGOWAN: Marriage versus just living together **ABIGAIL McCARTHY:** The fighting Irish **J. BRYAN HEHIR:** Double debate **WILLIAM LEE MILLER:** Talking good **BOOKS:** Maloff on Mailer, Coleman on papal power, Mills on art, McConnell on Tom Robbins, Mestrovic on Djilas & Tito, Silver on Douglas

Urban enterprise zones

RICHARD MOUNTS

Will they be a new hustl

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Correspondence

The Vatican & Israel

Vancouver, B.C.

To the Editors: Fine article on Jerusalem in your December 19 issue—but what I believe begs for a solid treatment is the Vatican's persistent refusal to recognize the State of Israel. Is the rationale that we (officially) are waiting for the peace treaty that will confirm Israel in international law (*National Catholic Reporter*, Dec. 19) really adequate? In my view, according to other Vatican recognitions of states it is not. How can our church/pope offer adequate mediation in Near East problems when we juridically deny the existence of one of the parties: Israel? How about some help on this? In the meantime, I personally take every public opportunity to "recognize" the State of Israel. Only thus am I able to agree/disagree with her actions/positions in the real world.

(REV.) JAMES R. ROBERTS

Media on the carpet

Los Angeles, Cal.

To the Editors: I have just read Jack Holland's article, "The Men on the Blanket"[Nov. 21]. I am neither of Irish descent nor Catholic; however, I have been studying Irish history and following the current political situation in Ireland for the past several years. One thing that has disturbed me about this situation has been the American media coverage, which, for the most part, has unquestioningly accepted the British government version of its involvement in Northern Ireland. Very little of the Irish nationalists' version of Britain's involvement in their country has managed to seep through the barricade of British propaganda.

As a result the American public is rarely exposed to the issues which were raised in Holland's article: the legal system which is being used to convict terrorist suspects and the brutality to which suspects are subjected both during interrogation and in prison after they are convicted. It is encouraging to see such a comprehensive discussion of these issues anywhere in the American media.

MARCIA SIMONSON

Homosexuality: an exchange

Coventry, R.I.

To the Editors: "A Christian Homosexuality?" [Dec. 5] was a cheat and a disappointment.

First, the article contributed no especially Christian perspective on homosexuality but was simply an endorsement of contemporary secular thinking on the issue. The entire article could have appeared in *Psychology Today* without changing a word. In spite of the subtitle, *"in the light of Scripture, authority, and reason,"* reason held the upper hand throughout, facilely manipulating the two sacred sources.

Secondly, although Father Vacek conceded that homosexuality is biologically deficient, he suggests that it is psychologically beneficial. Homosexuality ". . . *in the light of Scripture, authority and reason*" is by definition a psychological deficiency. A homosexual orientation is—let's be honest—nothing other than self-hatred, and seeking personal growth through intrinsically deficient means is contradictory.

Thirdly, Father Vacek's tone in writing about homosexuality approaches too closely the secular media's conception of homosexuality as an attractive arrangement between attractive people. He neutralizes what is essentially a grim, morbid, and superficial lifestyle. Father Vacek, like the homosexuals he writes about, is living in fantasy land on this count.

Commonweal could now provide a real service to its readership by printing an authentically Christian statement about homosexuality which would take seriously such pertinent Christian mysteries as Original Sin, the Cross, Grace, and the specialness of marriage. Perhaps the subtitle could read, ". . . *in the light of Scripture, authority, reason, and faith*," the last resource having been left untapped by Father Vacek.

(REV.) JOHN A. KILEY

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: I extend a simple thank you to both *Commonweal* and the author for the most reasonable and enlightening article I have seen on homosexuality: "A Christian Homosexuality? [Dec. 5]. Father Vacek treats the subject seriously but without the usual panic. Thank you.

M. L. TOOHEY

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: I'm sorry you added the heading, "In the light of Scripture, authority, & reason," to Father Vacek's article, "A Christian Homosexuality?" [Dec. 5]. His point is rather that Scripture and authority furnish no light. And those of us who have also read George Steiner on Anthony Blunt in *The New Yorker* come away wondering just how much light the clerics of (t)reason have to offer us in our concern to understand as well as love all people.

(REV.) P. KROLIKOWSKI, S.J.

Arlington Heights, Ill.

To the Editors: The author of the Dec. 5 article, "A Christian Homosexuality?" asks whether "a homosexual orientation and consequent homosexual activity

(Continued on page 157)

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DR. REAGAN'S DUBIOUS MEDICINE

THE FAVORITE METAPHOR these days is medical. The American economy is critically ill, and Dr. Reagan is prescribing strong medicine. Or, for the surgically minded, he is proposing a drastic operation. The skeptics are talking the same language. They ask whether the administration's new budget isn't economic laetrile or unnecessary surgery. They are worried about the side effects.

The problem, quite simply, is that the good doctor is proceeding on the basis of a misdiagnosis. A lot of government programs may need trimming or recasting altogether; but it is not the bigness of government, especially federal government, that is at the heart of America's economic troubles. The number of federal employees, both as a percentage of the population and as an absolute figure, has been dropping over the last decades. So has the percentage of GNP devoted to federal purchases of goods and services. Yes, transfer payments have grown — without them, the last decade would have seen a marked increase in inequality — but for all that, between 1968 and 1980 the portion of Gross National Product accounted for by all federal outlays increased by only six-tenths of one percent. It is at the state and local level that the growth of government has really taken place; and yet again, between 1968 and 1980 all levels of government together increased their tax receipts by less than one-and-a-half percent of GNP. Federal debt, as a percentage of GNP, is falling, not increasing. Corporate taxes have steadily shrunk. And government in the U.S. spends less, owes less, taxes less, regulates less, and pushes for less equality than do the governments in most of the other advanced industrial nations — whose economies are outperforming ours.

Big Government is, of course, a popular villain, partly because Americans have always been suspicious of government and especially of the "feds," partly because since the late fifties Washington has indeed expanded into new areas of American life, sometimes wisely, sometimes clumsily, primarily in order to reduce racial injustice and to protect the environment. These efforts, whatever their limited relevance to today's economic problems, have certainly antagonized many citizens. Telling these citizens that Big Government is also the cause of stagflation and low productivity is like telling the average teenager that skin problems are due to too much homework; it strikes a responsive chord.

The further problem is that there is no alternative diagnosis for the present ills with comparable simplicity and force. Most of the other doctors admit to considerable uncertainty about the ultimate causes of stagflation and declining productivity. Bad planning and bad management in government are surely part of the difficulty, but so are bad planning and bad management in key industries like autos and steel. Even more basic are a series of structural changes in economic life: the increasing concentration of industrial and financial power in large corporations; the achievement of a degree of affluence, government safeguards, and labor power that affords

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resistance to periodically "shaking down" the economy by reducing wages or ruthlessly exploiting the environment; and above all a dramatically altered prospect for America in the international economy, with the loss of our post-1945 dominance over Europe and Japan, with the emergence of multinationals, and with the sudden and apparently irreversible jump in the cost of energy. The economic diagnosticians who admit all this into their bedside counsel are going to suffer the disadvantages that preachers who accept the higher criticism have when compared with fundamentalists: what they gain in complex truth, they may seem to lose in total certainty.

And the certainty of the Reagan administration is surely wondrous. This, in fact, is the strongest argument for Dr. Reagan's approach, an argument that not a few editorial commentators have emphasized. In economics, as in health, there is a major psychological component. The very fact that so many Americans have been convinced that Big Government is the problem, and that now the Reagan team is going to do something about Big Government, could possibly set in motion a pattern of expectations and behavior that would be salutary. Dr. Reagan may present himself as internist or surgeon, but it is as a psychologist that he may succeed. The *New York Times* may consider the Reagan economics "murky" but "the psychological strategy is worthy" (February 19); the paper speaks of "Dr. Reagan's couch" and "psychonomics" (February 28). Edwin Meese, from the White House, described the president's program as "maybe eighty percent psychological." As any honest medicine man will tell you, faith healing has its role in university hospitals as well as in revival tents.

So the approach *could* work, especially because those on whose psyches it must have its greatest impact are the holders of economic power, who look with a modicum of trust upon this president as they did not upon Jimmy Carter. It could work, but frankly we don't think it will. This is no "Hundred Days" scheme. It will be scrutinized and challenged; loose ends will unravel. Another price shock from OPEC or a foreign crisis or a prolonged national labor dispute or a summer flare-up of racial tension will reveal how much more is involved in a "new beginning" than cutting back the federal government. Even the administration's optimistic four-year timetable for reducing inflation is too drawn out unless the approach has more going for it than psychological impact.

When doubts like these arise, editorialists turn to talk of "experiments" which must be "given a chance." The slide from therapy to human experimentation is all too easy. Most of those so open-minded about this experiment are not the ones upon whom it will be primarily worked. It is generally, and indeed rather cavalierly, conceded that the Reagan remedies are "untested." Specifically, the untested segment is the supply-side Lafferism which hypothesizes that a broad tax cut will push up productivity through incentives faster than it can create inflation through increased consumer demand. Both Democrats and a significant (although quiet) faction of Republicans are highly skeptical about this proposition, and with good reason: Lafferism is to economics what *est* is to serious psychotherapy. But the shot-in-the-dark character of the administration's program doesn't end there. Not only is it uncertain that the wealthy recipients of tax windfalls will invest in capital goods rather than collectibles, it is not even certain what the relationship of investment is to productivity in an economy dominated, as ours is, by the service sector. Investment, in any case, has been increasing in recent years while productivity declined. Yet take away the ebullient but untested Lafferism and the uncertain hopes for greater capital investment, and what is left of Dr. Reagan's remedy? Mostly the old nostrum of fighting inflation through fiscal and monetary restraint, economic slack, and unemployment.

If the tax cut half of the administration's budget is highly risky, both the tax cuts and the spending cuts are unfair. Despite talk of evenhandedness, the burden of budget cuts clearly falls on the poor, the near-poor, modest-income wage earners, and the disabled. Medicaid, food stamps, CETA, and mass transit reductions are hardly balanced by cuts in middle- and upper-middle-class programs like college loans, scientific research, and support for the arts and humanities. As for tax cuts, given the 1981 Social Security boost, a family of four with $10,000 in wage income will be paying out $5 *more* in 1982 (and may be losing food stamps besides), while a $50,000 family will save $840.

What is worse, this unfairness comes wrapped in a philosophy. "The taxing power of government must be used to provide revenues for legitimate government purposes," the president declared. "It must not be used to regulate the economy or bring about social change." The suggestion that regulating the economy and bringing about social change are not legitimate government activities is obnoxious. More, it is obnoxious nonsense: from Hamilton on, the government has acted to regulate the economy or bring about social change. And it is hard to believe that Ronald Reagan is unaware that he, too, is doing exactly the same. He is redistributing wealth and power to the rich; he is favoring some sections of the nation over others; he is shaping the economy. Should he, despite the patent weaknesses of his diagnosis and prescription, be "given a chance"? Those who answer "yes" should do so in full awareness that there may be no second chance for the lives that are blighted or the regions degraded by a wrongheaded program.

Liberals should take advantage of this moment to review and revise social programs that are misconceived, mismanaged, or otherwise wasteful. Many of the Reagan team's targets are indeed ready for overhauling, though not for keelhauling. But it is shortsighted as well as cowardly not to stand by the strong reasons for doubting the Reagan plan's efficacy and equity. And just as the administration, amidst great uncertainties, has shown itself remarkably committed to the market principle, the opposition, even more conscious of the uncertainties, ought to lay tight hold of the principle of fairness. A resolute insistence that the burdens of "a new beginning" ought to be shared fairly will be the incentive that produces a better alternative than the administration's budget. The supply-siders should understand.

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INTO EL QUAGMIRE

So it's to be a military solution for El Salvador — and we fear, more of the same soon enough in neighboring Guatemala where Amnesty International has just accused President Romeo Lucas Garcia of directly supervising a concerted policy of political assassination.

Secretary Haig's sales job for improving the quality of official terror in El Salvador with the latest U.S. technology possesses the subtlety of a General George Patton. What did the "white paper" show?

Much less than was claimed for it. In actuality, it documents a rather successful arms-raising tour by Salvadoran Communist party chief Shafif Handal. The Communist party in El Salvador is miniscule and weak; it is understandable that Mr. Handal would like to put the guerrillas and the Democratic Liberation Front in his debt and, should the insurrection succeed, thereby gain a major voice in the future revolutionary government. The evidence of arms shipments in fact does nothing to substantiate Haig's inference that the guerrillas and their supporters are no more than tools of an international Communist conspiracy. It indicates — surprise! — that foreign Communist governments would like to have such influence.

This is not to say that Marxist-Leninist principles do not guide the revolutionaries — along with about equal amounts of Christian liberation theology. Nor is there no danger at all of a change in power resulting in a Salvadoran government that is hostile to the U.S.; indeed, American policy over a long period has assured that this would be the case, as American policy today, reversing the Carter human-rights campaign, is assuring that any number of future Latin American governments will be hostile to us. But these facts do not contradict what former Ambassador White, among many others, has said so often: the Salvadoran insurrection is homegrown, not imported.

Haig's white paper tries to force us into a narrow dualism, an either/or choice between anti-democratic leftist terrorists and reform-minded military leaders who have promised elections in 1982. It would be nice were it that simple, or were the characterization of opposing forces, either of them, true. But of course the portraits are misleading, in part downright false. The Duarte junta is neither centrist nor credibly reformist; as quickly as it was formed after the murders of American nuns and the six opposition leaders, it was properly named by San Salvador's bishop Arturo Rivera y Damas as a front for official terror. And contrary to Gen. Haig's assertion, the Democratic Liberation Front (not necessarily the guerrillas) is not supported by a measly 700 individuals, but includes the collective memberships of just about every union, peasant group, slum group, and professional organization in the country — as well as much of the minor clergy and nuns.

What the white paper demonstrates, finally, is that while commander-in-chief of NATO and chief executive of United Technologies, Gen. Haig was not paying much attention to Central American realities, nor let us add, to the way in which, among his coreligionists, a theology of liberation and resistance to oppression was emerging from Christian base communities at the grass roots level. Failing that, he has laid over Central American realities — the need for higher and stable commodity prices and a redistribution of political power in the whole region — the iron curtain of big power politics.

Is the U.S., like the Soviet Union in Poland, really determined to do permanent sentry duty for oppression in Central America? We have reckoned the costs of this course wrongly. In 1932, when Salvador's military leaders massacred 30,000 peasants, the U.S. government looked the other way. This time, they'll be doing it with our weapons and with our advisors.

Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

THE FIGHTING IRISH

LAICIZING THE TRUSTEES

"A little later he rang for the nurse who was on floor duty. 'Would you mind going down to the chapel or sending word down to Sister Cecelia that Notre Dame has them fourteen to nothing at the end of the first quarter and that it's all right. She can stop praying.'

In a few minutes Sister Cecelia came into the room. She was very excited. 'What does fourteen to nothing mean? . . . That's a nice safe lead in baseball. But I don't know anything about football. It may not mean a thing. I'm going right back down to the chapel and pray until it's finished."

—from a story by Ernest Hemingway

IT SEEMS curiously dated now. She belongs to the past—that stereotypical American nun who loved baseball and prayed for victory for Notre Dame, a university a thousand miles and more from her native Montana and one which she was not likely to see. She is gone now, and so is the Notre Dame which once commanded a fierce tribal loyalty from Catholics coast to coast, a loyalty which had little to do with education but everything to do with a football team. It placed us first in *something* highly valued in the nation.

Hemingway wrote that story in the '30s. In the ensuing fifty years the University of Notre Dame has ceased to be the flagship of a minority and has joined the list of the twenty or so top-ranking American universities. The reaction to the announcement of the forthcoming retirement of its president, Father Theodore Hesburgh, makes that clear. It was a reminder that Father Hesburgh's pres-

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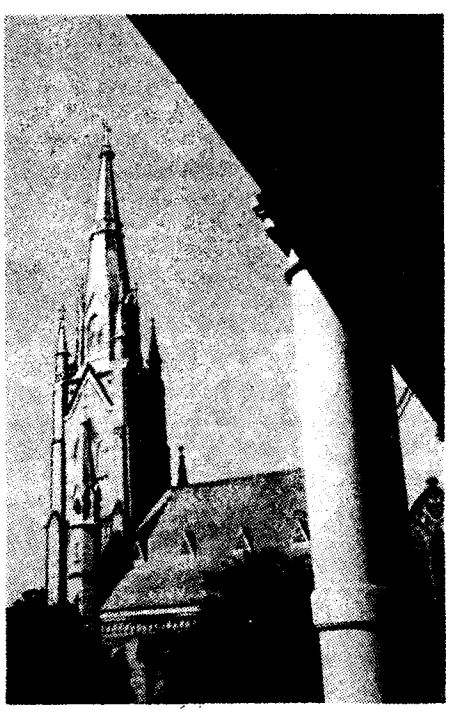
ence in the establishment mainstream of this country for the last thirty years is evidence not only of his own strong personal qualities but of the change in the American Catholic college and university and how it is regarded.

Catholic colleges and universities so-called have been established in this country since the beginning (Georgetown claims 1789 as its founding date) and pre-date the parochial school system. Like most denominational institutions they had mixed aims. Their object was as much to protect the faith of their students and provide them with a haven apart as it was to educate them for participation in the common society. Historically they introduced professional and technical education, and education in the physical sciences, only as these areas began to attract their traditional constituencies to their secular counterparts. Hence, most of them remained liberal arts institutions, and many became very good ones. Atherton Bean, trustee of Carleton College and 1980's recipient of the Trustee of the Year award given by the national Association of Governing Boards, has said that most liberal arts institutions were founded a hundred or more years ago and "have pervasive clouds of alumni, long-service faculty, traditions and sentiment which envelop and condition them."

As this latter became true of Catholic colleges and universities—especially in this century—they became the centers of closely related, almost familial, communities in which religious and laypersons had vital common interests. The institution became not just one "work" of a religious order but a place, an intellectual home, which in some sense "belonged" to both religious and laity. It could be said that it was the working example of "church" in which religious and laity were one. There was slow recognition of this fact. Catholics tended to think of their educations in terms of religious orders—"I was educated by the Jesuits—I went to the Brothers"—and religious orders fostered the tradition. But eventually some colleges, notably Notre Dame, became so strong and individual in development that the school, not its sponsoring society, came first in the public consciousness, and in the loyalty of students, alumni, faculty, parents, and supporters which make up its scholastic community.

Perhaps the first step in this slow metamorphosis was the emergence of lay faculty members as full-fledged partners in the academic staffs of Catholic colleges. (The story of this long and involved process is a chapter in the history of education which still needs to be written.) The second step has been the almost astonishing pace in the so-called "laicization" of boards of trustees. This phenomenon has been the object of some study by the Association of Governing Boards.

"Until the mid-1960's the upper echelon governance of American Catholic colleges and universities was the responsibility of the religious institutes which had founded, staffed and sponsored them," wrote Dr. Martin J. Stamm of the University of Pennsylvania in discussing the study he authored on the subject. But by 1977 his preliminary findings showed that in an overwhelming majority of instances the religious communities had formally endorsed laicization of the corporation governing boards of their institutions of higher education. An amazing sixty-eight percent had comprehensive corporate boards; this meant that the religious community had relinquished unilateral control and that lay members of the board had equal voting power and equal weight in board decisions. What is more, lay presence on governing boards had reached sixty-two percent of all trustees by the time the Stamm study was made.



Dr. Stamm attributes the change in governing boards to two factors: American "societal forces" and Vatican II's *aggiornamento*. These made the inclusion of laypersons possible and welcome. What the "societal forces" might be can be deduced from the areas in which college presidents felt their lay trustees were most helpful—legal affairs, construction, development and fund-raising, public and community relations, and relations with the government. This has, after all, been the era of government grants, the unionization of private institutions, soaring institutional costs, affirmative action and anti-discrimination legislation. It has also been an era when the permanence and stability of institutions has been important to the philanthropists and foundations who might endow them.

(There have been rumbles from Rome as to how properly to define a Catholic college or university, and as to where the residual ownership of its property lies. Catholic college presidents are laboring to clarify these questions in the context of the unique history of Catholic institutions in America. Father Hesburgh, among others, has been a pioneer in this effort.)

Not everyone is happy with the growth in influence of lay trustees and the discussion about it continues today, notes Dr. Stamm. Some of the latent worries can be laid to rest by his findings, however. "Laicization had not diluted the Catholic purpose of the institution, had not diluted the sponsoring religious body's affiliation and had not reduced the perceived influence of the sponsoring community to an unsatisfactory level." He hazards the hope that lay trustees "may enable Catholic higher education to embark upon a new, bold course of development which may yield a distinctive, valuable contribution to all of American society."

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

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Church/world watch

Nuclear weapons: the two debates

J. Bryan Hehir

IN BOTH CHURCH and state the debate about nuclear weapons is with us again. The product of this renewed interest appears regularly in religious and secular periodicals: from *America* and *Commonweal* to *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy*; from *Christian Century* and *Christianity and Crisis* to *Commentary* and *International Security*.

In spite of a common problem, it is misleading to speak of a single debate; there are two debates, one religious the other secular, which seldom intersect. It is possible to sort out the questions in each discussion without pretending to solve them.

The religious debate has both historic roots and new manifestations. The moral question of warfare has engaged the Christian community since the patristic period. Agreement that war was a moral, not a purely technical, problem did not yield a unified moral response in Christian theology. The code words of just-war and pacifism symbolize the centuries of moral debate, even if they do not capture all the complexity of this long argument. Part of the complexity is that the moral analysis of war has consistently moved beyond moral issues to ecclesiological questions. The relationship between questions of war and peace and the role of the state pushed the moral debate on war into the realm of church-state relations, the nature of the church, and finally to choices about forms of personal Christian witness. From the Reformation until Vatican II, historians could neatly divide the religious debate between Catholic just-war teaching and Protestant pacifism as found in the historic peace churches.

Today the moral map is more complex. The best scholarly work on the just-war ethic has recently come from Protestant authors, some of them in the peace tradition. In the Catholic community academic interest and activist witness have created a constituency of Catholic pacifism. In addition, two of the predominant possibilities of war today, nuclear conflict and revolution, have reshaped the classical questions of the moral debate. The destructive capability of nuclear weapons has produced a constituency of nuclear pacifists who blend just-war analysis with a pacifist conclusion regarding nuclear weapons. The persistence of radically unjust socio-economic structures has led others, otherwise inclined to a nonviolent witness, to find justification for the use of force as a last resort in situations like Somoza's Nicaragua, Ian Smith's Rhodesia, and now El Salvador.

The religious debate understandably occurs in terms of specific issues, but just behind the issues lie the traditional categories, whether explicitly invoked or unconsciously appealed to by the participants. Shaping the specific positions taken on SALT, the Persian Gulf, or Central America there is the irreducible moral question of whether the taking of human life for political purposes can be justified. It is not a moralist's quibble to look for a principled answer to this dilemma. War is too serious an issue to be left either to the generals or to flaccid moral argument. There is more than one legitimate response to the basic question, but only one response can be held by the same person.

An equally significant part of the religious debate is the ecclesial issue of whom the church addresses in its teaching on warfare. Twenty years ago the late John Courtney Murray described the church's role on war and peace as setting the right terms for public policy debate. Murray's description accurately specified a major concern of Catholic teaching on war: the desire to shape the atmosphere of decisions taken on the use of force. There has always existed another approach which focused not on the quality of the public debate but on the specificity of the church's witness to peace. In contrast to Murray, Professor Stanley Hauerwas of Notre Dame defines the community of the church, not the public order, as the first object of the church's teaching. This ecclesial question, in turn, leads to decisions about personal witness; one's view of the role the church should play in the nuclear debate shapes a perspective on which actions and activities are the most effective modes of Christian expression.

The religious debate moves on these three levels. People equally convinced of the need to reverse the ravaging arms race can and do divide on the moral, ecclesial, and witness questions. What is not as visible in the religious debate are the issues which divide the secular protagonists.

Christoph Bertram begins a recent *Foreign Affairs* article with the observation that "arms control as a concept for international order and as a tool for restricting military competition is in deep trouble today." Examining the causes of the trouble reveals some of the basic differences of perception in the religious and secular debates about nuclear weapons.

In the religious debate the concept of arms control (as well as its more ambitious analogue, disarmament) is presumed to be self-evidently useful. In the secular debate the utility of arms control is now being assessed in a framework shaped by Edward Luttwak's *Commentary* article "Why Arms Control Has Failed" and Leslie Gelb's defense of the concept in *Foreign Policy*, cast in the modest terms of "The Future of Arms Control: A Glass Half-Full." In the secular debate today, restraint of the arms race must be explicitly justified before it can be pursued.

An even more striking clash of

(Continued on page 159)

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BOTH APPROACHES RELY ON MANDATORY PENALTIES

Why gun control won't work

DON B. KATES, JR.

THE ASSASSINATION of John Lennon, and the nearly contemporaneous murder of Dr. Michael Halberstam, resulted in renewed media interest in the exceedingly complex and amorphous topic of "gun control." Unfortunately much potentially useful energy was defused into the perennial handwringing about "a society that refuses to impose any rational restraints upon the spread of firearms" (Phil Kerby, *Los Angeles Times,* January 15, 1981). Since the United States has, in fact, a vast system of restraints on firearms, including 20,000 federal, state, and local laws, the commentator can only mean that these statutes do not qualify as "rational." Yet it should be noted that all proposed changes in gun control, like the present laws themselves, follow one or another, or some combination, of what most people would consider two perfectly "rational" strategies for preventing firearms misuse. The interdiction strategy seeks to keep firearms, or at least handguns, from those deemed likely to misuse them. The deterrence strategy allows people to own guns, but seeks to deter misuse by the threat of heavy penalties.

In its most extreme form the interdiction position is championed by the anti-gun organizations, e.g. the National Coalition to Ban Handguns (NCBH). Similarly the most extreme deterrence position is articulated by the pro-gun organizations, e.g. the National Rifle Association (NRA). Both sides alternate between pointing to violent crime as proof that present gun laws don't work and claiming that the efficacy of their own proposed additions is proven by local (and invariably temporary) reductions in violence in some jurisdiction which has adopted part of their program. Thus anti-gun organizations have attributed some rather unimpressive recent reductions in Washington, D.C. violence to the adoption of interdiction legislation there—even while unblushingly citing the failure of New York's, New Jersey's, and Michigan's much more drastic interdiction laws as proof that even state handgun bans are inherently unenforceable without a nationwide ban. The NRA's position is more embarrassing. Though it does not remind its members of this, the NRA originated and lobbied into law such interdiction measures as banning handgun (or all firearm) ownership by convicted felons, minors, and mental defectives, and prohibiting the carrying of concealed firearms. In other words, the NRA is largely responsible for most of the present laws whose failure it claims proves interdiction doesn't work.

The NRA could maintain its consistency, though at considerable political cost, by frankly avowing these laws as experiments whose failure proves the futility of any form of gun control. But the NRA does not suggest the repeal of such present interdiction legislation. Rather, it proposes the addition of a drastic new deterrence-based mandatory penalty scheme: minimum prison sentences of five, or even fifteen, years for anyone using a firearm in crime—unlike, say, knife-robbers who would continue to serve lesser sentences and/or to receive probation or parole. Remarkably enough, interdiction advocates have seized upon the same device to enforce their proposed handgun ban: a federal permit requirement administered to exclude the ordinary citizen (i.e. the owners of ninety-nine percent of America's present sixty million handguns) who would be subject to mandatory imprisonment for at least a year if caught with a handgun.

By whomever proposed, mandatory imprisonment departs sharply from the modern practice that the judge suits the penalty to the individual crime and criminal. Penological theory has the legislature generally set the retribution appropriate to each kind of crime—with the judge determining the length of sentence necessary to protect the community from the particular defendant he sees before him. Judicial discretion to single out the most dangerous offenders is considered particulary necessary today when prisons are so overcrowded that the choice is between allotting long sentences to some crimi-

DON B. KATES, JR., *a former civil rights worker and O.E.O. legal services lawyer, is a teacher of constitutional law, criminal law and criminal procedure who maintains a largely civil liberties practice in San Francisco. He is the editor of* Restricting Handguns: The Liberal Skeptics Speak Out.

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nals or short sentences to all. Though judicial discretion in sentencing has come in for sharp criticism recently, especially in connection with its alleged potential for encouraging rehabilitation, no consensus has emerged on any alternative approach that would restrict such discretion severely.

But gun-owners (as well as many who are anti-gun) back the deterrence-based mandatory penalty for gun violence as an antidote to supposedly "soft" judges. And the only hope for banning handguns altogether is a mandatory penalty more frightening to millions than the prospect of giving up what they see as their families' only defense in a violent society. The penalty must be mandatory because research from Chicago, Detroit, Boston, and other cities shows that judges are unwilling to jail most violators of our present less onerous laws. One pioneering Chicago study, by Bendis and Balkin, denies that the failure of the present law against carrying handguns necessarily proves either NRA claims that gun laws can't work or NCBH claims that only a total ban will work: "It is very possible that if gun laws do potentially reduce gun-related crime, the present laws are all that is needed if they are enforced. What good would stronger laws do when the courts have demonstrated that they will not enforce them?"

BUT IT MAY BE useful to hear from the other side, before blindly following the NRA and the NCBH into abolishing judicial discretion in sentencing. Judge Shields of Chicago's special Gun Court, which was the subject of the Bendis-Balkin study, describes the poignant human factors involved: most defendants coming before him have no criminal record; they are secretaries, shopkeepers, the elderly—often people who have previously been victimized by violent crime—who carry guns because they are vulnerable, terrified and have no other way of protecting themselves. Judge Shields observes that the readers of his article (published in a Bar publication) "would not go into ghetto areas except in broad daylight under the most optimum circumstances—surely not at night, alone, or on foot. But some people have no choice. To live or work or have some need to be on this 'frontier' imposes a fear which is tempered by possession of a gun."

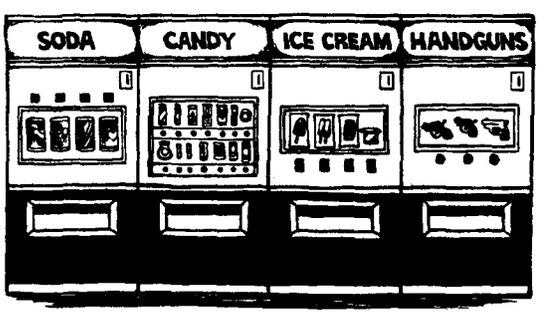
Unable to bring themselves to sentence shopkeepers and the elderly to prison, the judges impose only modest fines. This should not be misunderstood as opposition to "gun controls," however. Judge Shields has testified before Congress in favor of federal handgun prohibition—perhaps in hopes that the responsibility for enforcing that would fall on the federal judiciary rather than upon his Court.

While the NRA points to the injustice of interdictionist mandatory sentencing, whose burden would fall primarily on the ordinary citizen rather than the hardened criminal, the results of its own proposal for mandatory imprisonment can be scarcely less appalling. One case charged under the California mandatory imprisonment scheme for crimes with a gun involved a nineteen-year-old hunter who jokingly pointed at his brother a shotgun he thought unloaded and pulled the trigger. Without at all condoning such an irresponsible act (wanton negligence resulting in death is manslaughter), the appropriateness of mandating imprisonment is dubious. The same degree of negligent conduct with some other instrument, e.g. a car, would probably have been penalized with a stern lecture and a heavy fine—and the life-long knowledge that a second's careless stupidity had killed his brother. Do we really want to force a judge to sentence a boy with no prior criminal record, and who is clearly heartbroken, to five years in prison just because his reckless, stupid act was with a gun rather than a car?

Beyond the human costs of either the deterrence or interdictionist forms of mandatory imprisonment are the financial ones. A first offense robber who might plead guilty because probation is possible, will demand a jury trial and prosecute every kind of appeal if faced with a mandatory five-year sentence. The same is obviously true for the ordinary citizen facing a mandatory year sentence for just owning a handgun. Consider the consequences in New York City where, because handgun permits have not been available to ordinary citizens, police estimate there are at least two million illegal handguns. To provide jury trials for just one-tenth of one percent of these violators would incapacitate New York City's court system; and the addition of these two thousand prisoners would destroy a state penitentiary system already faltering with twenty thousand prisoners.

IN LIGHT OF these costs legislatures would do well to take a very long look before enacting the mandatory penalty schemes of either the pro- or anti-gun groups. Basic to those schemes is the belief that handguns (or at least firearms of all types) are the deadliest of weapons. Thus the NRA theorizes that fewer victims would be killed if robbers were deterred into using knives or other weapons instead of firearms. More questionably, NCBH theorizes that fewer people would be killed if prospective murderers could be interdicted from having handguns. Close inspection exposes a variety of flaws in such arguments.

Depriving the general public of handguns (which kill less than ten percent of those they wound) would not reduce homicide if rifles and shotguns (which kill up to eighty percent of those they wound) were to be substituted. Of course, though there are about twice as many long guns as handguns, their lesser concealability makes it impossible for them to be substituted in all assaults where handguns are now used. But most handgun homicides occur indoors where concealability is relatively unimportant and many others involve weapons retrieved from an automobile in which long guns could be kept as easily



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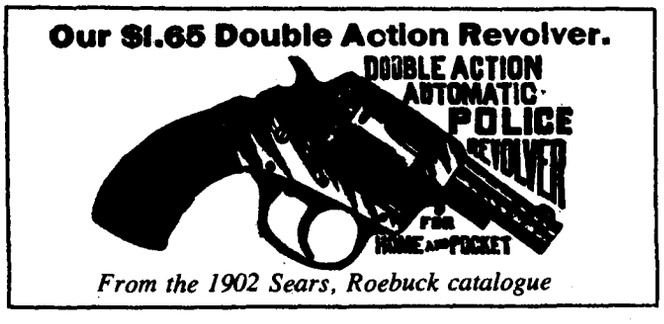
as handguns. Given their greater deadliness, if long guns were substituted in only thirty percent of the assaults that now occur with handguns, the rate of gun homicide would double.

The NRA is touting its alternative deterrence strategy by reference to a University of Michigan study which credits that state's newly enacted mandatory penalty for firearms crime with an "almost miraculous" reduction of Detroit homicides. On sober reflection, however, it is difficult to take this conclusion seriously. A minimum five-year penalty would have substantial deterrent impact upon the average citizen (or even the average robber or burglar) who might be contemplating committing a crime with a firearm. As the NRA itself never tires of pointing out, most murders are committed not by your average firearms owner, but by disturbed, aberrant, sociopathic persons with long records of irrational violence—losers whose frustrations are expressed in violent outbursts against those immediately around them. The NRA argues (correctly enough) that a handgun ban will not affect murders by such people because they are too irresponsible to obey it. By the same token, it is absurd to suggest that a person so disturbed and aberrant that the penalty for murder cannot curb his violent outbursts will worry about an extra five-year penalty for murdering with a gun. As to the (more rare) contract killer or other rational murderer, the deterrence-based mandatory penalty doesn't work since he assumes he isn't going to be caught and punished at all. It would appear that Detroit's homicide reduction is but another of those unaccountable local (and temporary) fluctuations in violence rates which have so frequently been mistaken for the product of some gun control policy.

More realistically, the NRA claims that its mandatory penalty program will deter robbers (who are generally not irrational) from using guns. Michigan and other states which have enacted such legislation do report a substantial decrease in gun robberies. Note, however, that there is no decrease in robbery overall, for, as gun robberies go down, robberies with other weapons increase.

One positive effect of the NRA program should be reduction in the number of robbery victims killed. Though robber-murder is rare, it is rarer still if the perpetrator's weapon is not a firearm. On the negative side, robbers without guns eschew commercial targets, preferring to hit isolated individuals, particularly the elderly and other "soft" targets. British and American studies uniformly report that serious victim injury is much higher per capita in robberies without firearms.

Another disadvantage of the mandatory sentence as a deterrence strategy is the negative effect of mandatory penalties on the courts' capacity to single out the most dangerous offenders for long-term imprisonment. Contrary to the rantings of some advocates of deterrence-based mandatory penalties, the problem is not that judges are "soft" on criminals. The problem is that our prison system is desperately overcrowded with almost 300,000 inmates. Judges have to give a robber who has only pointed a gun probation if they are to have space available for the rapist or robber who has savagely and gratuitously injured his victim with some other weapon. The unseen consequence when legislatures mandate imprisonment for all gun criminals is more pressure to release other criminals whom judges would have individually evaluated as more dangerous—and to release murderers who have served their mandatory seven-year sentences even if they continue to be dangerous.



From the 1902 Sears, Roebuck catalogue

THE POINT OF all this is that the issues are a great deal more complex than the proponents of either interdiction or deterrence-based mandatory penalties realize. Such penalties have only a cosmetic effect upon violent crime because they treat symptoms while ignoring root causes. The history of crime in England is instructive. It will startle those who know England today that, until the early nineteenth century, it was considered the most violent country in Europe. For example, the per capita homicide rate in thirteenth-century England exceeded that in our worst American cities today. Yet those homicides were remarkably similar to ours, most perpetrators being disturbed aberrants, often alcoholic, and the victims their relatives and acquaintances. These homicides occurred despite an interdiction more perfect than anything NCBH could imagine: there were no guns in the thirteenth century. Murders were committed with knives, clubs, agricultural implements, and the like. Nor, contrary to NCBH's claims, can England's relative peacefulness today be attributed to its present interdiction policies. England had no "gun control" until it abruptly banned handguns in 1920, a century after violence rates began a steep decline.

English history equally demonstrates the essential futility of the NRA's deterrence-based mandatory penalty proposal. For England had this in a more rigorous and drastic form than even the NRA proposes: during all the period 1200-1820 in which England led Europe in murder, rape, robbery, burglary, larceny, etc., all those and many other crimes were mandatorily punished by death.

The nineteenth-century transformation which largely obliterated English violence is attributable not to the coercive force of law, but to the profound economic improvements and related social, political, and cultural changes. Real reduction in criminal violence cannot be accomplished by trying either to take away weapons or to frighten criminals out of using them. It will come only when economic, political, social, and cultural changes greatly reduce our production of people who *want* to misuse guns, knives, agricultural implements, etc. In this case, the long and difficult solution is the only solution, despite the illusory attraction of cosmetic short cuts.

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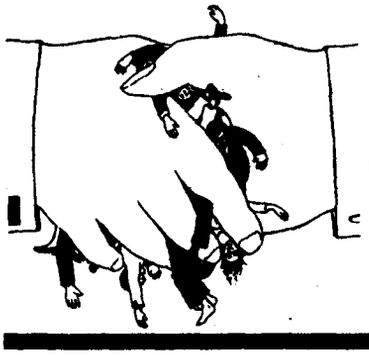

A CLOSE LOOK AT REAGAN'S FRESH IDEA

The 'urban enterprise zone' hustle

RICHARD MOUNTS

OVER THE PAST thirty years billions of federal dollars have gone into efforts to improve economic conditions in cities, with minimal success. Last summer, the *New York Times* reported the results of a study by Richard Nathan and James Fossett that found that cities considered "distressed" in 1960 were in the same or worse condition in 1978, and that much-touted cases of urban revitalization were limited to small sections of cities and should not be taken to indicate more general improvement.

We rarely think to look to the Republicans for fresh ideas on urban policy, but here is the Reagan administration coming into office with what many consider one of the most interesting new ideas in some time. Reagan proposed to create "urban enterprise zones" which he says, should create large numbers of new jobs and produce dramatic improvements in the most distressed parts of the cities. Reagan credits Buffalo, (N.Y.) Republican Congressmember Jack Kemp with the original idea, which is the heart of the legislation he has co-sponsored with Democrat Robert Garcia of the Bronx. The "Urban Jobs and Enterprise Zone Act," as the bill is known, proposes delineating zones in urban neighborhoods like the South Bronx—part of Representative Garcia's district—and offering substantial tax incentives to private businesses that locate there.

Surprisingly, the enterprise zone idea is being looked at seriously and with some degree of support by individuals and groups on both the right and the left. Black columnists Carl Rowan and William Raspberry have both commented favorably on the bill. At the end of November mayors and city councilmembers from around the country, meeting in Atlanta at the National League of Cities annual convention, spent considerable time examining the bill, and by and large liked what they saw. Even Representative Augustus Hawkins has called it a "bold, innovative approach." All this prompted John Hebers, in an article in the *New York Times,* to sense a "tenuous consensus" emerging in support of the proposal, and a strong likelihood that some version of the bill will emerge from the 97th Congress. (Not everyone joins in the consensus. Ex-ACTION head Sam Brown calls it "colonialism brought home.")

What sort of proposal is it that joins the leader of "populist" supply-side Republicans with a Democratic representative of one of the most depressed urban areas of the country, and then draws support from both a leader of the full employment movement and the man who promises to use his position at OMB to lead an all-out attack on social spending? What is going on?

Kemp's explanation would be that the idea of enterprise zones is neither liberal nor conservative, but simply pragmatic, and thus can be supported by anyone interested in helping the cities. But a careful look at the bill and some guesses about how its various components may work raises some questions.

The bill is likely to bring new economic activity into the zones, but it is not clear whether this will be a net addition to the total economy, or simply a shift away from some other part of the city or country. It is also not clear that the bill will do much for any of the interests it claims to serve—city governments, neighborhoods, small businesses, or the unemployed. The proposal may be hard to classify in Washingtonian "liberal" and "conservative" categories but that may say more about the quality of political analysis in the city than it does about the bill.

Despite the novelty of the zone concept, the bill draws on a familiar approach: it provides direct benefits to business, and then *hopes* this will help cities, neighborhoods, and poor people. This, in yet another guise, is the profoundly status-quo-oriented and conservative method of trickling aid to poor people and communities through businesses. It has not worked in the past, and there is little reason to expect it will this time.

The basic idea for the bill has been imported from Great Britain. There, last summer, the Thatcher government initiated an experimental program conferring zone status on areas of roughly one square mile in seven cities, and offered tax advantages and freedom from many land-use planning requirements to businesses that locate in the areas. Sir Geoffrey Howe, Thatcher's Chancellor of the Exchequer, championed the idea in the cabinet, but, interestingly, drew valuable support from Peter Hall, a professor of urban studies at Reading Universiy, and a socialist, who first proposed the zones as an experiment in "non-planning" in an article published in 1969.

Critical of the maze-like planning requirements that he felt

RICHARD MOUNTS *is a policy analyst at the Center for Renewable Resources in Washington, D.C. This article is reprinted from* Democratic Left, *published by the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (854 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003).*

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had grown up around local development, and impressed by the freedom of action enjoyed by both nineteenth century capitalists and contemporary Hong Kong entrepreneurs, Hall proposed a partial recreation of those conditions in the most decayed sections of British cities. Free of regulations, and spurred by tax incentives, many of the new science- and technology-based firms would move into the zones. Hall further anticipated that, while these firms would employ mostly highly-skilled workers from outside the zone, the presence of new firms in the zones would generate service businesses that would employ semi-skilled and unskilled residents.

In this country, Hall's ideas have fit in well with Kemp's and other supply-siders' views that government taxation and regulation are most responsible for our low rate of growth.

THE BILL outlines the requirements for zone designation and stipulates the incentives to businesses in the zones. Local governments would apply to the Secretary of Commerce for designation. A potential zone would have to include at least four thousand people, a substantial number of whom are poor. Poverty could be defined by one of three different measures:

1. an unemployment rate at least twice the national average for the preceding two years, and a rate of at least thirty percent of the families below the official poverty level;
2. an unemployment rate at three times the national average for the preceding two years;
3. more than fifty percent of the families below the poverty line.

As part of the application, the local government would have to demonstrate its own commitment to lifting the weight of taxation by agreeing to a permanent reduction in property taxes in the zone by at least twenty percent.

The bill then lays out five different tax benefits for businesses, employees, and property-owners:

1. a reduction in Social Security payroll taxes for employees and employers by ninety percent for workers under twenty-one, and by fifty percent for workers twenty-one and older. General revenues would be used to make up what was lost to the Social Security fund;
2. for non-corporate property, a fifty-percent reduction in the capital gains tax rate by increasing the allowable deduction from sixty to eighty percent on the sale of personal property in the zone;
3. for corporations, a reduction in the capital gains tax rate to fifteen percent on property in the zone;
4. a reduction in corporate income tax rates by fifteen percent;
5. permission to depreciate the first $500,000 worth of property purchased each year over a three-year period.

The Heritage Foundation, which has provided a good deal of the backup analysis for the bill, urged that regulatory relief, such as a lower minimum wage and freedom from local zoning rules, accompany tax relief inside the zone. Kemp, however, has not included deregulation measures in the bill, arguing that they would stand in the way of getting labor and local government support.

The cost of the bill, Kemp says, should be minimal. At worst, he calculates, if no new business was stimulated by the act, the tax breaks would only cost the Treasury from $1 to $1.4 billion a year. The zone criteria are supposed to have been defined in such a way as to apply to areas including only about five percent of the population. In fact, he does not expect the government to lose anything. He expects the bill to increase tax revenues as land that is being kept, so to speak, fallow, is cleared and put into productive use.

KEMP AND GARCIA have begun a national speaking tour touting the bill as a way to improve the fiscal health of badly distressed cities, revitalize neighborhoods, promote small business startups, and employ the jobless. In fact, in its present form the act is likely to be of little immediate benefit to any of these groups, and could, in some instances, turn out to do more harm than good.

Local governments. For local governments any potential benefits of receiving zone designation for parts of the city must be balanced against two immediate costs.

The first involves certification of the unemployment and poverty conditions in a zone application. The basic problem is that good, reliable numbers for these conditions do not exist for such small units. Despite several years of effort, unemployment figures are neither reliable nor valid below the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area level. Kemp has responded that the 1980 census data, with new measures of neighborhood conditions, should solve part of the problem. Even so, he admits that a local government would still have to invest funds in sample surveys to get more precise poverty and unemployment figures. He presumes that the benefits of a zone designation should be enough incentive to convince the city to make the investment.

The second is the required twenty percent reduction in property tax rates in the zone. The act would permit the city to phase in the reduction at a rate of five percent a year. But it could take at least that long, and probably longer, before new businesses would produce new tax revenues. Meanwhile, as businesses sought to locate in the zone, the city would be faced with new capital costs for streets and bridges, water and sewage systems, as well as higher costs for police and fire protection in the area. City officials could find themselves making what could turn out to be a series of politically unpopular decisions as they reallocated tax burdens to make up for what is being gambled in the enterprise zone.

In some instances the property tax requirement may simply preclude cities from applying, since several state governments prohibit localities from assessing property at less than full value, or applying different rates in different parts of the city. In other instances the city, unable to sacrifice any revenues or to afford development costs, may be too poor to apply.

Neighborhoods. Perhaps too impressed with the devastation of the South Bronx, supporters of the bill seem to presume that all depressed neighborhoods consist of acres of rubble, deserted buildings, and a few trapped residents who would abandon the area in a minute if they only had a way out. To the

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contrary, many areas likely to be eligible for zone designation will be more like Poletown in Detroit, a neighborhood that includes land the city wants to clear and lease to General Motors for a new Cadillac plant. The area, which takes its name from early Polish residents, is a distressed but still vital neighborhood including several active churches, a hospital, small commercial businesses, and large sections of decent moderate-income housing. Much of this is to be torn down to make room for the Cadillac facility.

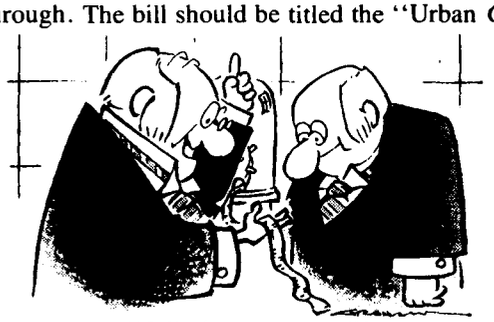
Enterprise zones, if they work at all as their supporters think they will, could inflict similar large-scale physical disruption on a neighborhood, and would not even include any of the relocation assistance that came with urban renewal.

In addition to dislocation from physical redevelopment, the bill may add its weight to the push towards economic displacement in both the zone and in nearby neighborhoods. To some extent this would occur as white collar administrative and professional employees sought housing closer to work, and to some extent it would occur as land values and rents increase, forcing resident and small shop owners to find more affordable space.

Finally, a zone may undercut the stability of adjacent neighborhoods. Small, relatively mobile businesses may choose to move into a zone and out of surrounding areas, much as office tenants have tended to move out of older buildings into the new, more attractive, glass towers in cities like Atlanta and Detroit. Why, one could ask, should a business stay and pay normal taxes in a neighborhood with ten-percent unemployment when it could pay much less by moving a few blocks to one with fourteen-percent unemployment. At the same time, nearby businesses that cannot move into it may end up being undercut by competitors able to operate in the zone with significantly lower costs.

Small businesses. Kemp has put particular emphasis on what the bill could do to aid small business startups. But most new businesses go for several years before they have much tax liability. A decision to launch a new business depends more on one's ability to find financing than on expectations of post-tax profits. The tax benefits in the bill all work to reduce a business's operating costs after it is underway, not to help it get started. In some instances property tax relief could be helpful, but many, if not most, small businesses rent the facilities they occupy, and the landlord may or may not choose to pass on the property tax savings.

The unemployed. Here the trickle-down character of the bill shines through. The bill should be titled the "Urban *Capital Subsidy* and Enterprise Zones Act," since the incentives are weighted much more in that direction than they are to jobs. The bill contains just one means of reducing labor costs (the politically volatile proposal to lower Social Security taxes), while it contains at least three subsidies for equipment and plant (lower capital gains taxes, lower property taxes, and accelerated depreciation).



"Jelly beans are up!"

Moreover, there is no guarantee that the jobs created by this investment would go to the unemployed in the zone. The bill simply requires that fifty percent of the employees of a "qualified business" be residents of the zone. Nor does it state how long employees must have lived in the zone before they are employed in the business. A firm trying to avoid the costs associated with training and employing low-skilled workers should still be able to find ways to qualify for the tax benefits.

IN SUMMARY, the Kemp-Garcia proposal presents already hard-pressed local governments with up-front costs and uncertain future benefits, threatens some still-vital neighborhoods with both physical and social disruptions, offers the wrong kind of aid to new small businesses, and offers minimal promise of employment for people in the zones who need it the most.

Who would benefit from the bill? Two groups appear to have the best chance of improving themselves under the bill. One is those who own potentially developable sites in a zone. As soon as the "green line," as Kemp refers to it, is drawn around an area, land values should increase. (There is some likelihood that the increase could end up offsetting the benefits of lower property taxes.) Realizing this, real estate interests, always a powerful group in local politics, should take a strong interest in the process of zone delineation. This, and the discretion allowed local governments, should create some marvelously gerrymandered zones in attempts to include politically important parcels of land.

A second group of beneficiaries should be larger, established businesses. Tax benefits are attractive only when a firm earns enough to face a significant tax liability. Most new firms struggle through several years before they reach that position. Therefore, the zones should look most attractive to executives of large, multi-branch firms thinking about opening another branch. They might be particularly inviting to a firm, inspired by the example of multinational corporations, looking for tax havens to shelter profits.

Kemp and Garcia have responded to criticisms by saying that the bill is only a first draft, and that they are open to suggestions for improvements. In that spirit, representatives of a number of groups in Washington have been meeting with staff from Kemp's and Garcia's offices to work out amendments. Discussions so far have tended to focus on ways to loosen the requirements for property tax reductions, to simplify the data requirements for poverty and unemployment, to avoid the massive political problems connected with the Social Security tax reduction, and to tighten the employment requirements.

But can the bill really be made to work for those who need

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the help the most? Could well-considered amendments lead it in the right direction? The answer is "probably not," at least not as long as its sponsors remain committed to an approach that denies the central importance of government planning and investment and prefers to work through large corporations. Enlightened trickle-down is still trickle-down.

Perhaps the best evidence of this, and of the ultimate failure of the approach as a basis for development policy, comes from a brief review of Operation Bootstrap, the economic development policy that guided Puerto Rican development programs for over thirty years.

Under legislation signed by President Truman in 1950, the island gained status as a commonwealth and at the same time became a very attractive location for businesses. The legislation freed U.S. corporations on the island of U.S. taxes, and at the same time permitted them to ship finished goods to the mainland freed of import duties. On top of this, businesses were exempted from most local taxes.

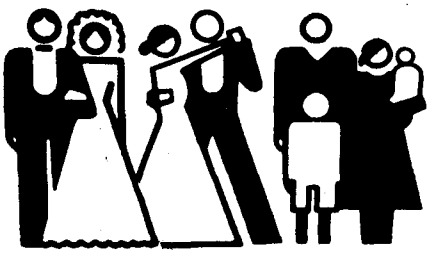
By one set of measures Operation Bootstrap was a remarkable success. In 1957, 500 American plants were employing 40,000 workers, and by 1977 the numbers had risen to 2000 plants and 140,000 workers. Corporations had invested more than $14 billion in the island. Puerto Rico's gross national product nearly quadrupled between 1950 and 1976; illiteracy disappeared; health standards improved; and car ownership came close to overwhelming the island's roads.

But another set of figures, as well as evidence from everyday life, tell a different story. In 1977, the official unemployment rate was twenty percent (compared to thirteen percent in 1960), but the governor's office estimated that it was probably closer to thirty. It would have been worse but for the migration of about three-quarters of a million people to the mainland. In that same year, seventy percent of the people were eligible for food stamps, and sixty percent were receiving them. Many of the companies that had first been attracted by low wages and low taxes were now leaving, looking for the same advantages in the Philippines, Taiwan, and South Korea.

A poor but diversified and self-sufficient agricultural society at the turn of the century had become by the late 1970s a poor and dependent industrialized society, importing $800 million a year in foodstuffs (while three-fifths of the arable land was out of cultivation), and receiving more than a billion dollars a year in aid from the U.S. It was a case, as Sidney Lens neatly summarized it, of "growth without development." Firms had located on the island, and some people had found jobs, but Puerto Rico, after three decades of trickle-down development, was further than ever from a stable, self-sustaining economy.

Kemp has said that the key to solving the urban crisis is finding out what leads to economic growth in cities. His solution has been to wed the simple truths of Adam Smith to the taxing powers of the modern state. But as the case of Puerto Rico makes clear, economic growth is only part of the task. The solution to the urban crisis is probably a much more complex and longer-term process than anything Kemp appears to have in mind. In many ways the model of Third World economic development suggested by the Puerto Rican example may be more appropriate. Development includes economic growth, but it also includes building up the capacity of local institutions, both economic and political; drawing on unique local resources, both natural and human; and meeting the most pressing local needs. In sum, it means greater equality in a more autonomous and self-reliant local economy. That will have to be worked out in a combination of federal, state, and local legislation that looks very different from the Kemp-Garcia proposal.

ACKNOWLEDGING LIFE IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY



Marriage versus just living together

JO McGOWAN

SOME MONTHS AGO we had a beautiful young woman from India (my husband is also from India) staying with us. At dinner, the conversation turned to the question of marriage versus simply living together. Smita, the Indian woman, maintained that marriage was nothing more than a convenience, a way to avoid the censure of society; that if two people were willing to commit their lives to each other, then marriage was an unnecessary formality, signifying nothing.

To engage in the kind of discussion that followed is to risk sounding foolish. One talks of "marriage" as an institution and yet it is apparent that one is talking out of personal experience that cannot help but be narrow and unimposing compared to the subject itself. Having been married not very long myself, I realized how presumptuous it is to say almost anything (even at the dinner table, let alone in print) about marriage in general. But when will it become *not* presumptuous—after five years, ten, twenty, fifty? The more

JO McGOWAN *contributes regularly to the* National Catholic Reporter. *This is her first appearance in* Commonweal.

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years pass, I also realize, the more changes in social and cultural conditions will separate me from those entering marriage then, and so perhaps my reflections would take on a presumptuousness of a different sort. In any case, the discussion that evening was so enlightening to me that I decided to risk my dignity and write down some of the thoughts that emerged.

Apart from anything else, marriage is simply a very practical institution. It is an institution which recognizes and makes allowances for human failings. Since constancy is a virtue that very few of us possess at all times, it is important that we see marriage as something beyond ourselves. The very nature of marriage insists that we see it so: when we marry, we create new life; we go beyond ourselves. We create responsibilities, the weight of which our marriages must be strong enough to bear. Marriage is one of those peculiar things (like God!) which makes immense demands of us while simultaneously giving us the strength to meet those demands. It is precisely because marriage is so difficult that we must see it as permanent. It is precisely because we are so likely to give it up that we must promise—at the outset, when everything is wonderful—that we are in it for life. (This is one reason, then, why the extreme prevalence of divorce is so troubling. It not only destroys the marriages of those individuals who choose to separate, but it erodes the *concept* of the permanence of marriage. It makes it that much easier for the next couple to give up.)

Simply living together, without "benefit of marriage" does not provide the security of knowing that this is forever. But if you need that security, our friend Smita says, then the relationship can't be that strong to begin with. Smita and I are both in our early twenties, still young enough to believe in the power of love to overcome all odds. And I do believe that. What I don't believe is that a wife and husband always love each other enough to stay married. There are times when love fails, and in those times, many people just take a deep breath and stay married because they *are* married. And when they come through to the other side, their marriages are stronger and more firmly rooted in love.

Smita grew up in India where divorce is practically unheard of—I grew up in an America where *marriage* is practically unheard of. She can perhaps afford to take marriage for granted. I can't. I have seen far too many of my friends—and even my parents' friends—divorce. I have taken care of too many children whose parents are separated. I have seen the scars that divorce inevitably leaves—the pain and near-despair in grownups; the bewilderment and insecurity in the children. I'm not saying that these couples didn't have problems; I'm sure they did. But no human relation is without problems. And if one enters into marriage, one should do it knowing full well that this is the case and that *in spite of it*, the marriage is forever. Living together does not carry with it the weight of a centuries-old tradition. The content of the relationship—a woman and a man living together sexually—contains all the elements that are present in a marriage, but without its form. It is like taking on all that is difficult in a marriage without taking

the helps that marriage can offer. Simply knowing that one is married, that one has promised—before God and the human community—that this is forever, puts a different light on the inevitable problems that one faces. One is more likely (given, of course, a belief in the permanence of marriage) to slog through, to get past whatever it is in the way, to stay together.

CONSTANCY, OF COURSE, IS NOT limited to those couples who are formally married. Many of my friends are living together. They have made serious commitments to each other, they have children and, for all practical purposes, they might as well be married. Indeed, several of them have relationships that I consider to be closer to the ideal of marriage than most of the married couples I know. But that, I think, is more a function of the kind of people they are, and not of the form of their living arrangements. They are extraordinary people who would probably make a success of any relationship.

Even so, there is, it seems to me, something missing. I wouldn't presume to judge what goes on between two people who have committed themselves to each other—in whatever form they have chosen. I can only look at their relationship as it is perceived by the rest of the human community. It is here, I think, that the strongest argument for marriage as opposed to living together can be made.

Let us assume two couples: One married, one living together. Both have promised a lifetime commitment, both have children, both are trying to live with each other as lovingly, gently, and non-violently as they can. What is the difference?

The difference, as Ravi and I pieced it together that night with Smita, is this: one is a community-building act from the very beginning and the other is not.

To marry, to celebrate a love and a commitment publicly, in the presence of family and friends, is to say that the meaning of one's life can only be found in the context of a community. It is to acknowledge one's part in the human family, to recognize that one's life is more than one's own, that one's actions affect more than oneself. It is to proclaim that marriage is more than a private affair between one woman and one man.

To live together seems to me to imply that the central relationship of one's life is nobody's business but one's own. To live together is a decision reached privately and put into motion alone. There is no community blessing or celebration of the decision.

And what the community does not bless, it does not feel

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responsible for. Couples who are living together often find themselves quite alone when problems arise in their relationships. Their community may quite properly feel that such problems are none of its business. It was not asked for advice, or even congratulations, at the outset; why should it feel any responsibility now that things are going badly? On the other hand, a community which is asked to witness and bless the beginning of a marriage is far more likely to feel a sense of responsibility to the couple as their marriage grows and develops. I grant that most couples who do actually marry do not ask this of their community. Indeed, most couples think of the people at their wedding simply as guests who have to be fed, and not as participants in a community celebration. More on that in a bit.

The need for privacy, for individualism, looms extraordinarily large in American culture. We have been brought up to believe that it is a sign of weakness to admit that we need others. We have made a virtue of going it alone. Our ideal family is composed of a mother, a father, and one or two children. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins are all kept at a safe distance, and even neighbors are required, by zoning laws, to be at least an acre away. That this should be reflected in young peoples' choosing to live together, an essentially private choice, is not surprising. What *is* perhaps surprising is the extent to which most *marriages* are also quite private affairs, all the while purporting to be community events.

MOST WEDDINGS say very little about the two individuals marrying — or about the community witnessing the union. Most weddings say something about the amount of money the participants have to throw about. They say something about fashion. They say something about respect for authority, in the form of the State, which issues the license, for a fee.

Most wedding ceremonies take place on an altar — so far from the guests who, theoretically, are there to witness the union of these two, that no one but the priest can hear the vows they exchange.

Most weddings are the occasion for bitter arguments: over relatives one cannot abide but invite anyway, seating arrangements at the reception, who pays for what, how many guests each family is allowed. . . . It goes on and on until many couples wish they *had* just decided to live together and skip all the hassle.

What is most telling, though, is the fact that so many weddings do not welcome children. Indeed, many outright discourage them. The phrase "No children, please" can be found frequently on wedding invitations and hard are the judgments passed on parents who dare to bring them anyway. Children, the hope and the future of any community, are an interruption, a noisy distraction, an additional and unnecessary expense — they take away from what is really important.

And what is really important, apparently, is that two grownups want to live together, but before they can, they have to get married.

This alienation of the community from the wedding cere-

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mony, this lack of identification with the bride and groom — who seem more like actors playing pre-arranged roles than two people expressing their love for each other — serves to depersonalize the celebration. There is a boring sameness to weddings — one goes because one has to, because it is expected. The community is not asked to take part, and it does not. And the wedding sets the tone for the community's role in the marriage itself. The message is clear: It should limit its involvement to making appearances at the appropriate times, giving gifts on the appropriate occasions. Nothing more.

WHEN Ravi and I married, we wanted a community celebration, one involving as many of our friends and families as possible. We wanted our wedding to reflect our religious (Catholic/Hindu) and cultural backgrounds, as well as our social and political concerns; we wanted our wedding to be a celebration of our love, naturally, but also for the community who had come to share our joy.

And it was. What a diversity of talents went into that day — from the wedding invitations and programs we designed, Ravi's side in Hindi and mine in English, to the wedding clothes made by Ravi's cousin and the wedding cake made by my father and a close friend. Ravi's mother performed the Hindu wedding ceremony; two priest friends witnessed the Catholic ceremony. Ravi and I wrote our own vows and selected the readings (from the Hindu and Christian scriptures) that friends and relatives read at the ceremony. Two nuns who had taught me in high school provided their oceanside convent for the day. The vegetarian banquet (both Indian and American foods) was entirely prepared by friends who arrived a few days early to cook . . . and best of all were the children everywhere, behaving exactly as children should behave, especially at a wedding.

It seemed to us then, and it seems even more so now, that our wedding was a symbol of the way we want to live our lives: surrounded by family and friends; giving and receiving the gifts of time, laughter, advice, and help; sharing food, work, prayer, and celebration; creating a world where children are free and full of joy.

But marriage is a community event. It expresses, in its ideal form, a belief in the goodness of community, a belief in the beauty of two people who love each other coming together to live in communion, a belief in the wonder of human life, a belief so strong that it expresses itself in the creation of new human life.

If two people who say they want to marry do not believe this, then perhaps they should not marry. If they want to "join America" — to live in the suburbs with themselves and their 1.7 genetically screened children, exactly one acre from the nearest neighbor — then perhaps what they want is not marriage but just to live with each other.

If they want to be part of the human community, to start building the kingdom of God here on earth, then marriage is probably what they are seeking. And if it is, then the wedding itself, which is the beginning of marriage, should be an expression of their belief in community.

Media

TALK ENGLISH GOOD

HOW NEWSPEAK IMPACTS US

WHEN YOU READ George Orwell's essay "Politics and the English Language," you believe that he is writing about something important. When you read the amusing book by NBC's Edwin Newman, *Strictly Speaking* (which advertises itself, in its paperback version [Warner Books, $2.75], as "America's #1 word classic"), you are not quite so sure.

Newman is funny and readable; hopefully at this point in time he impacted the public in terms of the ongoing process of an improvement situation, word-wise. But what he is doing in that book and its successor, *A Civil Tongue* (Warner Books, $2.75), is mocking mistakes, like the ones in the previous sentence. Absolutely everybody writing about Newman's books, including many of the people who blurb it (I learned the verb "to blurb" from a highly regarded critic of English literature) makes some little joking use of one of his bad examples. The second book, Newman told me, almost wrote itself from examples people sent him, and that is easy to believe.

A great many of these collected horrors come from the modern media, and especially from the medium upon which Ed Newman's stocky figure sometimes appears — not often enough in my view. There is an idea put forward in popular books, magazines, and especially television shows that the modern media — that is, popular books, magazines, and expecially television shows — have damaged the English language. And they certainly are right about themselves.

I moved some years ago from New England to the middle west, and thereupon watched television, as I had not done in Connecticut. I felt dimly that something I had known in the middle west of my youth had vanished. What was it? One day, watching an advertisement that urged me to think smart, buy smart, live smart, I figured it out. It was the adverb. Schlitz beer goes down smooth. All across a great stretch of the nation commercial television and advertising has killed the adverb. If you should meet one, treat it gentle.

They have done the same to distinctions of number, as football color men keep making these kind of mistakes. So do everybody else. Everybody now has trouble with their speaking (variants of this ubiquitous error have the advantage, at least, of avoiding the his/her problem).

After my standards had been softened by a decade's living in media-marinated middle America, I presided over a gathering on "Plain English in a Complex Society" that was sponsored by the Indianapolis Public Library and a group of Indiana English teachers — the kind of meeting in which a man would

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arise in the back of the room and say, "I think you have been unfair to the passive voice in English." I decided that catching each other in mistakes was not the most important aspect of this big subject.

The gathering, held in a region in which the sentence "we defensed them pretty good" is not a mistake, unless of course we *didn't* defense them pretty good, produced an acute verbal self-consciousness. In the presence of John Ciardi, the lexicographer Laurence Urdang, and a passel of English teachers deploring the deterioration, rot, and decay of language, one preferred not to be an instant exhibit of that deterioration, rot, and decay. At the end of the day I felt the strain of a whole day of trying to be sure my verbs and subjects agreed as to number. Some of the audience were verbally self-conscious to the point of being tongue-tied. I picture somebody introducing (let us say) Newman, out on the circuit, so overcome by fear of some comic mistake as to give up speech altogether and simply to point to the strict speaker of the evening. Perhaps, with shaking hand, he could hold up a sign with the speaker's name on it, but then he would need to be extremely careful about the spelling.

The companion to this self-consciousness about one's own mistakes is an alert attention to other people's, to the pendulums rowing canoes and watersheds turning corners — just in the mixed metaphor field — in someone else's remarks. The discussion of this subject always turns into a recitation of comic examples. The man was fatally killed. What is the current status quo? One of Newman's favorites is successfully foiled. ("Curses! successfully foiled again!") I have a contribution of my own, recently acquired. The prime minister of Jamaica, visiting President Reagan, said on the McNeil/Lehrer report that something or other was the "acid bottom line test" of modern government — thus managing to meld two extremely tired current clichés into one beautifully mixed metaphor.

When you set out to criticize language in this mistake-catching way you make yourself both overly self-conscious about words by themselves, and vulnerable to sharpshooters in the same line of work. I found it a little comic that in Indianapolis one of the policemen on the language beat said of the others — including Newman and Safire — that "they make the mistakes they criticize." You get extra points if you catch them. Newman wrote in his second book "there are risks in writing a book in which you find fault with the language of others" and proceeded to fill four pages with mistakes spotted by readers in his first book. Even E. B. White reports the glee of readers who found him writing "the fact that," a phrase that Will Strunk detested, in White's own first revision of Strunk's little book, *The Elements of Style*.

In Orwell's essay there's none of this catching of errors and scoring of points, because he has a larger purpose. There is no element of aristocratic condescension in his point of view. He links his interest in language to political understanding and to moral and political thinking. Euphemisms and jargon and gummed-together catch phrases keep the citizenry from understanding well what is happening in the world: that's what bothered him. And the people he criticized were professionals — editorial writers, professors, reporters — people who do know better and ought to do better, for serious reasons. But some other comments about language are less fundamental, and give off an aristocratic aroma.

John Ciardi answers the charge that he is "elitist" by saying that he believes in a "Snob Club everyone can join." I don't think that quite covers it on the snobbery side. Most Eliza Doolittles do not meet a Henry Higgins, and without that they can't "join." English is spoken better in Greenwich (mispronounced Gren-Witch by some radio announcer overheard by Mr Urdang, to his distress) than it is in Indianapolis or in Winnebago, Nebraska. English is spoken better in Oxford, I suppose, than it is in Greenwich, although Mr. Newman collected some amusing errors of a peculiarly English stamp. You absorb from the people you talk to a set of standards and habits and tastes that it is hard to shed or change. This geography illustrates an inescapable social element, class element, which is bound in with the use of language, as everybody in England has always known.

In my youth I tried to get straight when to use "that" and when to use "which." I do not know which one to use or what the reason is that one uses which rather than that. I tried reading Fowler and it gave a set of rules so complicated as to set me back rather than to carry me forward. An editor on a magazine for which I wrote told me the simplest way was just to use "that" except when you had to use "which," unless it was the other way round. Later he told me — he was a man who had lived most of his life in France and didn't believe the march of Civilization had reached Indiana — that you really could never get it straight unless you had been born in a particular section of England.

Let me distinguish two kinds of errors: those of the folk, springing from geography, class, ignorance, poor education, and laziness, and those of communications people, which spring as much from manipulative purpose as from these other causes. Presumably the Winston cigarette advertising people do know how to use the words "as" and "like." And Caspar Weinberger and the defense people have some purpose when they transform the neutron bomb into the "enhanced radiation device."

Now let me distinguish three kinds of criticism: having fun (which is what Ed Newman mostly does); demonstrating one's superiority (as most of the critics do; as we all do); examining the effect on politics and society (as Orwell did). The first is enjoyable, within limits, although eventually it palls; the second is to be avoided. The third is important, and peeps through the jokes sometimes in Newman's books. Does the language reflect the mind and taste and variety and sensibility and wit of living human beings? That's the acid bottom line test.

Orwell wrote about this subject not only in the famous essay but also in *1984*, with his invention of Newspeak. The destruction of human freedom by the destruction of a human language is one of the central ideas of that fierce and gloomy book. Big brother deliberately strips language of its connotations, its human variety, its ability to make subtle distinctions of value.

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He turns the use of language into something a machine could do.

Orwell feared the day of that machine. And, among critics of language, Orwell is more equal than the others.

WILLIAM LEE MILLER

(This article is adapted from the introduction to the Poynter pamphlet, "Plain English in a Complex Society.")

Screen

BACK FROM THE DEAD

THE DOWN-AND-OUTERS UP AND AWAY

RICHARD DONNER's *Inside Moves* has the same kind of appeal that dodo birds have. Whenever I see a picture of a dodo bird, I can't help feeling a certain charm in its ungainliness, a poignancy that comes from knowing it's extinct. *Inside Moves* is also about something that's extinct, neighborhoods. The story is centered on a neighborhood tavern, and it's about how the patrons, local residents all, are able to help each other out in time of need. This just isn't a *mise en scène* in which we can believe any more, so pulling off a credible, even rather engaging movie about it is a surprising *coup*.

We know that the only people left in the neighborhood bars in our run-down cities now are the bindlestiffs, the semi-derelict, the pensioners on fixed incomes, the hard-core unemployed—in short, the social and emotional cripples. *Inside Moves* deals with this depressing reality by making all its local residents into physical cripples. The film's cast of characters, adopted from a Todd Walton novel, has all its afflictions out in plain sight. There's a blind man (Burt Remsen), a paralytic in a wheelchair (Bill Henderson), and a bi-lateral amputee (Harold Russell, who really is an amputee, a World War II veteran who won two Oscars for his role in *The Best Years of Our Lives* and now heads the President's Commission for Affirmative Action). The least disabled members of the community are a couple of gimps, Roary (John Savage) and Jerry (David Morse). Even the guy who owns the bar (Steve Kahan) has a massive coronary and has to be carried out on a stretcher. The one advantage this assortment of basket cases has is that the wounds inflicted on their bodies have left them healthy in mind and spirit.

These men have passed beyond any social pathology, beyond being the mere damaged personalities we might expect to find hanging out in a bar. Their visible scars have carried them through the looking glass from that reality into a more pure-symbolic order of existence. In acquiring physical disabilities we can see, they have freed themselves from the kind of mental ones we can't. The film's opening scene establishes this in a manner that is dramatic to say the least. In it Roary, an obvious misfit, a loner in a state of high anxiety, goes up in an office building and throws himself out a window. John Savage is an actor with a natural vulnerability, a built-in edginess, that hasn't been seen in movies since Montgomery Clift. He's an actor who can show us everything we need to know about Roary's background, about what has brought him to this suicide attempt, virtually at first sight. But it's not Savage's deft gestures and twitches that give this opening what is, quite literally, its impact.

The impact comes from a single shot, not more than a few seconds in length, in which we see Roary's body falling to earth. In this kind of shot, we are used to seeing a dummy whose arms and legs flop about at impossible angles as it's dropped past the camera. But this time, we realize to our disbelief, we are seeing a real man plummet down the outside of the building. He's stunt man Dennis Madalone. It is his spectacular free fall which explodes us through the looking glass here. After it, we are ready to believe anything.

We are even willing—indeed grateful—to believe that Roary could have survived this suicide attempt. Dismissed from the hospital, he limps off in a daze to look for the bar where, he's been told, he'll find others like himself, down-and-outers whom the hospital has somehow had to return to the world. We accept at once that this is an entire community of men who have, like Roary, come back from the dead. Only these charmed characters could bring back to life as well the credibility of an institution like the neighborhood bar, or the long-lost idea of neighborhood itself. The opening scene has not only been Roary's *rite de passage*. It has been ours.

After that opening, Donner and his scriptwriters, Valerie Curtin and Barry Levinson, have us under their spell. Nonetheless, the world they have created remains limited in certain ways. Though self-sufficient, this world is also sealed. It is, both socially and aesthetically, a closed world, one that's still a dead end for the people in it. For one thing, it is a world of men without women. The plot contains a number of female roles. There's a prostitute with a heart of pure heroin (Amy Wright), a waitress (Diana Scarwid) who gets into a triangle with Jerry and Roary, and assorted lady bar flies. But these roles are all like skin grafts that don't take. This remains a man's world, and the center of the plot, such as it is, is a sports story rather than a love story. Jerry is a great schoolyard basketball player, an ace at one-on-one, despite his bum knee. If only he could get an operation, he'd have a shot at the pros...

The trouble with this premise is that to be one of those people who sit in bars watching the basketball games on TV is one thing. To be somebody who is *on* TV, playing the game, is something else. To go from one to the other is to pass back through the looking glass again, back into the real world. When Jerry does this, it creates a lot of problems between him and all the regulars at the bar he's left behind, and they're problems the film can never really resolve. Yet Donner, Curtin, and Levinson can't seem to leave off trying to solve them, either. The film itself becomes a kind of closed world, as if it had its own, inner laws of thermodynamics to obey. Every bit of plot material it has generated somehow has to be used up. No loose ends can be left. The result is an ending full of fake

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coincidence which, therefore, gives way to the kind of sentimentality and melodrama the film has resisted so well until then.

Still, the film continues to be appealing, to be a *tour de force*. Even in the best sit coms on TV, the characters are all housebound now. Bea Arthur's Maude and Archie Bunker on *All in the Family* virtually never left home. Bunker was a name with the right associations. Archie was a benign Hitler holed up in the bunker of his personality, a Dracula raging in his *schloss* because if he ever went out into the everyday light of reality, he'd wither right before our eyes. He had to keep it, as the series title said, "all in the family."

In the last episodes, as I recall, they did make the mistake of getting Archie out of the house. In fact, he bought a bar, and immediately began to seem a rather pathetic and doomed figure, someone no longer funny. In the one late episode I remember from the bar, Archie seemed to have aged horribly. He was as out-of-date and embarrassing as a character in a re-run of *The Goldbergs* would be. In effect, letting Archie out of the house killed the series since we had known all along that there was nothing there, outside the show's one set. Once he stepped out that door, Archie fell off the end of the world. Beyond it lay the limitless darkness, the void. *Inside Moves* at least rescues us for a few hours from the darkness of that void which TV has created in our lives.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

WITH FRIENDS LIKE NORMAN MAILER . . .

Getting Marilyn wrong

SAUL MALOFF

NORMAN MAILER'S second assault upon the life of Marilyn Monroe*—the first, *Marilyn*, was on balance bloated and self-indulgent, immoderately long, grossly verbose, wantonly fanciful: our man's besetting sins—Mailer's return to the unquiet grave raises questions of motive: the author's. Not that the expensive, extravagantly illustrated table ornament is a potboiler—of course it is that; but Mailer is Mailer, an original, like it or not, one of a kind (consider what life would be like with two or more Mailers in our midst), and unlike most other writers Mailer will, given enough rope, perform astonishing tricks with it, just before hanging himself.

So it was first time around: Mailer went on babbling in tongues until, almost by inadvertence, he burst suddenly into lyric, actually shedding unsuspected light on his subject. And so it is here: Mailer will surprise you just as and long after despair sets in, as it does early and often. But first and last the question of motive: what is it with Mailer that he can't simply let her *be* after all these years, eighteen since her sad ending? True, he felt cheated of her in life: how could she have overlooked him, living as she did just down the road during her marriage to Arthur Miller, in the adjacent Connecticut village? If only Miller hadn't got there first; and to compound the offense, Miller never asked him over to meet her, fearful, as Mailer goofily charges in that first incursion into the life denied him in life, lest Mailer make off with her. Writing about her is a way—as Tolstoy, Flaubert, and a thousand other writers know and have known—of getting her at last; getting into her head, so to speak, is the next best thing, and perhaps for a writer an even better one.

Milton Greene's photographs, because they existed, must have constituted a reason in someone's mind for producing the present book—there they were, a whole bursting portfolio of photos of Marilyn in her best years. Greene and his wife Amy were close friends of Marilyn Monroe throughout that period in her life, pillars at a particularly difficult time when she was enmeshed in contract disputes with her studio, heavily burdened by her own celebrity, and trying, with Greene as her associate, to establish her own production company. Greene's photographs range from the shallow, glittering, trite, showy disclosures of the too-familiar world of high fashion and celebrity as defined by press agents and gossip columnists—from these to the occasional truly revelatory accident when the shutter caught its subject out all unsuspecting, especially one of Marilyn that is used thematically: exhausted beneath tons of cosmetics, sad, (as if she had looked deep within and glimpsed the future), "wounded" (in the Maileresque and also the less arcane senses of that romantic condition), without defenses, movingly beautiful: not the "starlet," not the Hollywood beauty, not the movie sex-queen of legend, but an unforgettably beautiful woman. (Why photos of Giacometti, Richard Rodgers, Dizzy Gillespie, Avedon, and other persons of both sexes in no way related to Marilyn's life should appear, except that they thicken the book and display Greene's versatility, must be left to others to explain.)

But for all this, lending a helping hand to a friend is not sufficient motive for writing a book; nor, to be fair, is the prospect of turning a handsome Swiss franc. Mailer is a serious and honorable man, a greatly gifted writer, and it would be scurrilous to suggest base motives. The pot in constant need of filling is a huge one, as Mailer keeps telling us; but his literary conscience is larger still. He himself is evidently uneasy about what he has done and why he has done it. As

* *Of Women And Their Elegance*. By Norman Mailer. Photographs by Milton H. Greene. Simon and Schuster. $29.95. 287 pp.

SAUL MALOFF, *a novelist and critic, is a regular contributor.*

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with *The Executioner's Song*, his "true life novel" about the life and death of Gary Gilmore, Mailer goes to some pains to remind us that the present book occupies an intermediate zone between literary categories, inviting us to "call this an imaginary memoir, an as-told-to book, a set of interviews that never took place between Marilyn Monroe and Norman Mailer . . . ," adding "If Marilyn Monroe has been treated with more intimacy than is my right, well, blame Milton's photographs. They are so resonant. They tell us so much about women in general and Marilyn in particular that I am encouraged to take these chances with my imagination."

Hedges, of course; a writer's way of protecting his flanks, and the publisher aids and abets by calling it a "fictional autobiography." Having already presumed to ask us to accept the narrative voice as Marilyn's, Mailer goes so far as to tell us who the imagined characters are, the imagined scenes and conversations: in short the fictions outright; as if Amy Greene's generation-old recollections, clotted as they are with charged and conflicting emotions, were facts hard as bedrock.

Finally, however, Mailer rests his case as he must on the truths not of life but of art. Still jittery about his handiwork, he conducted a rather kindly and gentle self-interview, in the form of a courtroom trial, in the garish clutter of *New York* magazine well in advance of publication, by way not only of promoting the book but also and foremost as a way of blunting anticipated moral and literary criticism by the well-known strategy of getting there first and charging oneself with malefactions that turn out on closer inspection to be surpassing virtues hard-won against intimidating odds.

Here, under his own relentless interrogation of himself, he declares his steadfast affection, respect, admiration for Marilyn as artist and woman; and insists that his "imaginary memoir" is intended to validate those sentiments, though in places his artistic conscience impels him to darken the portrait by introducing imagined material designed, as he says, "not to add to Miss Monroe's legend but to shock its roots." Certainly it is the duty of an artist to shock roots, however infelicitous the phrase; yet in his preoccupation with root-shocking, with what are and what are painstakingly intended to be the lurid scandals of Marilyn's imagined life—fictions summoned like ghosts from the darkest regions of her early pre-celebrity years, which, in the absence of the actual biography we do not and apparently never will possess, have the explanatory power of art to penetrate otherwise unknowable mystery—pursuing these phantoms, Mailer seems wholly unaware of the less spectacular but no less damaging portrait he is actually executing.

Amy Greene's recollections of her late friend are almost always self-serving and unpleasantly complacent, and Mailer, by unquestioningly accepting the lot of them, enters into a nasty collusion to mock and violate his subject. The uninteresting intelligence—"revelations" of tabloid squalor and triviality—that the lady preferred not to wear underpants (or, for that matter, delighted in her body odors, is enamored of her "cuddly boobs," kisses her own arms) is merely the silliest example of a nagging, running bitchiness, the end result of which debasement is a portrait of the artist as a Dumb/Dizzy Blonde, indeed a perfection of the stereotype, with the superaddition of infantile narcissism.

Woefully unlettered, at least until the intellectuals gladly undertook her education, she was fair game (in the sense of sitting duck); she knew nothing, nothing—a blank tablet. In the late phase of her education, after her marriage to Miller, Arthur, she says, "kept bringing me literature—Russian books and Dostoevsky—and we talked about my playing Grushenka someday"; hilarious as this is, it gets better when we add to the pleasure of mocking her the even more exquisite one of baiting Miller, as when all wide-eyed innocence she informs Amy with the political sagacity of the 50's Left and purportedly straight from the playwright's mouth that "The working classes of the West will never buy the Cold War." Throughout, when Miller is not being banal, posturing, gloomy, he is solemn and pompous; and, much worse, he is venal, tightfisted, manipulative, and in the Greene-Mailer version the diabolical agent who, driven by greed, dissolved the flourishing Monroe-Greene partnership. But then, her real crush was on that "famous President" Abraham Lincoln, whom she "truly adored;" luckily for Miller she saw a certain resemblance between the two.

Nor is that the worst of it. She's crazy about and is constantly edified by Amy's colorful and erudite language, though she herself, while knowing just enough to be awed by her friend's brilliance, can scarcely grunt. "Maverick," she herself tells us (this is an "*auto*biography," bear in mind—this is Marilyn speaking of Marilyn), is only one of the countless words routinely used by her dazzling mentor which she doesn't understand. Doesn't even know what "damask" is, poor kid—*damask*—though you'd suppose that's exactly the sort of thing she would know. Can't utter the word "enthralled" without confessing it's "one of Amy's words," lest we foolishly suppose she might have had a few of her own (especially a word gushing straight out of the lexicon of press agentry . . . such as "enthralled").

The real fun is yet to come. On a self-improving list of mystifying words far beyond her paltry means, she spelled Bordeaux (as in white Bordeaux), spelled it (get this, now) Bordello—*Bordello*—"until I asked Amy, who gave a little shiver." And wondered, when she ran across the names Paphos and Lesbos somewhere, whether they were "dikes." Naturally the obscure phrase "embarras de richesse," an archaism preserved in aspic by a handful of reactionary academicians, left her paralyzed until dear Amy translated it for her as "Choose your candy, kiddo." Not until her Ed Murrow television inter-

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view, and only after all that loving, selfless tutelage, did she dare go public and "use one of the words I learned from Amy," the startling, recondite word being "long" as in desire, yearn, much want. "That is my Kismet," she says at another point, and adds hastily "Whatever Kismet may mean." That Kismet can't possibly be other than a show-biz term—and an especially awful example of the argot at that—seems not to have occurred to Mailer recently. Greene, costuming her in white blouse and black pompom skirt for some picture-taking, tells her she looks like a "Day-God" ballerina and not until later does she realize "he meant the painter Degas, who I had always pronounced to myself as De Gas." Life with Marilyn produced a snicker a minute; she was always good for a laugh. After enough of this sort of thing, fervent protestation of affection, admiration, respect comes to look a little threadbare, just a touch shoddy, possibly even oddly suspect. Astonishing how tone-deafness can overcome a writer whose sense of pitch can sometimes be so fine: Mailer is altogether unaware of the thousand little indignities, humiliations, mutilations; quite the contrary: he imagines he's embellishing her "legend" as "nice" and "charming"—the words are his.

But by his own account all this is subordinate to his principal motive in exhuming Marilyn. Speaking the language of an antiquated psychologism, Mailer labors under the naive illusion of the old-fashioned psychological novelist that if only you search strenuously enough and dig deep enough you'll find the buried secret and key to all the mysteries—what might be called the Fallacy of the Primal Scene—a repressed wish, an unconscious yearning, an actual or fantasized Event—those platitudes of primitive Freudianism; and having uncovered that, you need look no further, you need only assemble the pieces into the formal patterns of art. Mailer is glad to impart to us gory tales of failed pregnancies, of devastating menstrual agonies, of innumerable abortions (regarded by the patriarchal Mailer, with rabbinical ferocity, as baby-murder outright), of sexual debasement of the sort familiar to generations of aspiring "starlets," "maybe a dozen, maybe a hundred unrecorded episodes out of the near-anonymous years of her early career that left . . . some unquenchable horror, some incubus that lay over all later success."

Overheated, crude as all this is, Mailer has further "revelations" in store for us. For "we cannot comprehend her inability to live with her success, or her incapacity to make movies without torturing herself and others around her, unless we are ready to posit some awful secret in her past." And so saying, Mailer calls upon his Muse one last time; and she, obliging goddess, not about to let him down now, grants him a final request. Thus, by a tremendous effort of creative will, he imagines the explanatory acts. Sodomy on the handlebars of a souped-up motorcycle speeding wildly down Sunset Boulevard at eighty miles an hour with a smelly, scarred, toothless Hollywood stunt man no less; and if you think that's not enough, an extended episode with an epicene youth who hosts Hollywood orgies, turns on by sniffing armpits, bedecks himself with stetson hat and cowboy boots and, otherwise stark naked, leads an amorous Doberman pinscher about among the bodies writhing on the floors of his apartment, the scene of these flagrant idylls. And it is with this pit-sniffer that Marilyn plots the murder of his wife so that they may marry.

Not to put too fine a point on it: porn plain and fancy, fancy and plain porn. A dab of Miller, something of Sade, a lot of Mailer at his embarrassing worst and nuttiest—and an ill-used, badly soiled Marilyn. Poor Marilyn: fair game while she lived, and fair game still. Now perhaps we can declare the hunting season ended and at last leave her to heaven.

Books: ONE, HOLY, ITALIAN, & APOSTOLIC

PAPAL POWER
A STUDY OF VATICAN CONTROL OVER LAY CATHOLIC ELITES

Jean-Guy Vaillancourt

Univ. of California, $16.95, 375 pp.

John A. Coleman

JEAN-GUY VAILLANCOURT, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Montreal, has written an intriguing, controversial, learned and lively book. It deserves a careful reading and assessment by anyone interested in papal politics, social Catholicism or the role of the laity in the church. Vaillancourt's method is a nuanced and non-dogmatic Neo-Marxist approach to the study of religion.

Papal Power is an ambitious book, perhaps overly so. It combines a mixture of historical, empirical and theoretical perspectives to cover the history of lay movements since the beginning of the church and, more particularly, the mid-nineteenth century. Its central focus is the Vatican's control over the laity during the pontificate of Paul VI.

Vaillancourt set out, in 1967, to study the international lay Catholic elites who attended the Third (and, seemingly for some time to come, last!) International Congress of the Laity. He discovered that to understand the dynamics of that congress he needed to probe deeply into the factions within the Italian Catholic Action movement and the Christian Democratic Party and their interaction with members of the Vatican bureaucracy.

This study led him to conclude: "What is papal power all about? One might very well say it has to do mostly with the Italian political situation. Underneath the religious facade, one finds a lot of earthy politics." One also finds a church with universal pretensions mired in very local, often parochial, political concerns.

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Gramsci was right. There has never been an authentic, autonomously local Italian Catholic church. The pope is, simultaneously, Bishop of Rome and Primate of Italy. Consequently, the essential *Sitz im Leben* for interpreting many pronouncements to and for the universal church is a very local church indeed.

Vaillancourt's book is groundbreaking in sociology of religion in its focus on two, little-studied, areas: (1) the control or power mechanisms available to channel lay participation under clerical elites; (2) the interaction between the international church bureaucracy and the new demands put forward by laity involved organizationally at the supradiocesan level. This study is unique in providing a sociological profile of these elites.

The major theoretical contribution of the book consists in a typology of eight different kinds of power or control mechanisms available to churches (ecological, remunerative, coercive, social, legal, traditional, expert and charismatic power) whose usages Vaillancourt amply exemplifies A central chapter presents data based on a questionnaire distributed to lay elites at the Third International Congress of the Laity. This sample singled out, in its response, four areas of complaint: (1) The bishop and his co-workers are inaccessible to laymen and women; (2) Parishes are too large and impersonal, thus reducing the possibility of spontaneous community; (3) Lay activities are dominated by the clergy and (4) Lay initiative, even if undertaken in the spirit of the Council, is not rewarded or recognized. Vaillancourt summarizes this data by asserting that "The chief demands are not for relief from traditional moral prescriptions but for a series of new opportunities to participate in the functioning of the church."

Early on in the book, Vaillancourt poses his key question: "Is the interest in the laity on the part of the Vatican and the episcopate (through Catholic Action, Christian Democracy and certain organizations for the lay apostolate) directed toward mobilizing the laity in the defense of the interest of church authorities, or toward the sharing of power and increasing of grass-roots participation in the decision-making processes of the church? It is my hypothesis that the first alternative fits the evidence rather more than the second."

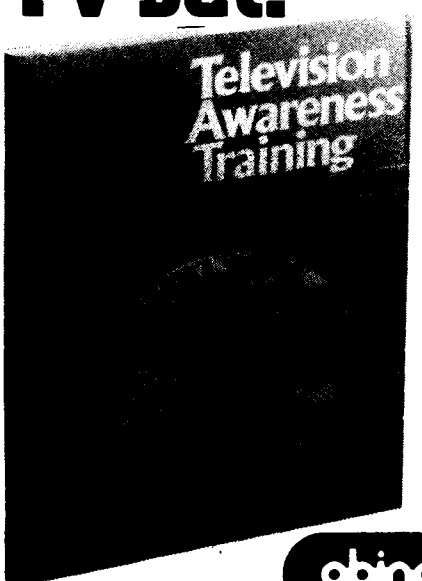
To explore these hypotheses, he marshals three strands of evidence. First, he rehearses papal directives for the world church about lay involvement from Pius IX through Paul VI. This is juxtaposed with papal involvement in Italian politics, from the *non-expedit* of Pius IX; through the condemnation of Murri by Pius X, which cut off the possibility of a Christian Democratic People's Party; the Vatican abandonment of the *Popolare* Party to accommodate the concordat policy of Pius XI; to Pius XII's pre-war "tilt" toward Fascism over Communism and his postwar espousal of an anti-Communist Christian Democracy.

Less familiar to most readers will be the accounts of Paul VI's close alignment with the *Dorotei* group in the Christian Democratic Party, that group's interlocking directorate in Italian politics, finance and world church movements, and Paul VI's flip-flop on the issue of an opening to the left in 1976 (spawning pronouncements with reverberations on the universal church, beyond Italy, for Latin America and Eastern Europe). Clearly, the dyad, local vs. universal, loses much of its value when the so-called universal church is so deeply involved in local Italian issues.

The third strand of evidence is an account of the movement to involve the laity after the First International Congress of the Laity in 1951, through the Second and Third Congresses, and the formation, first, of a non-curial Council *of* the Laity and, finally, the Pontifical Curial Council *for* the Laity (established December 16, 1976). Significantly, this latter organ is entirely staffed by clerics! On the basis of Vaillancourt's evidence it is very difficult to escape his conclusion that the Vatican did not encourage or tolerate any real grass-roots autonomy and participation in the church on the part of an independent laity.

Very disturbing to those who treasure church social teaching will be Vaillancourt's assertion that the actual exercise of international ecclesiastical authority

This book puts you in control of your TV set.



Edited by Ben Logan

The combined televiewing expertise of the Media Action Resource Center has produced a totally new way of perceiving the video phenomenon—one that shows you *how* to watch, rather than *what* to watch. And in addition to its numerous lessons and exercises, this guidebook contains essays by several noted social critics and commentators. So come out ahead in your viewing experience—read *Television Awareness Training.*
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functioned for "the legitimation of the neoliberalism of Christian Democracy and for the defense of the privileges of the Vatican in Italian society."

The basic flaws in Vaillancourt's account stem from the very ambition of his endeavor. He lapses sometimes into errors of fact (e.g., an assertion that there are already married priests in the Latin rite) or overblown rhetoric (the Vatican as a tool of "American Imperialism") which will tempt biased readers to dismiss the bulk of his real evidence. Again, much of the historical evidence he adduses is patient of a different, more nuanced, interpretation, e.g., concerning the silence of Pius XII on the Jewish question (cf. *inter-alia* Anthony Rhodes, *The Vatican in the Age of Dictators*).

Vaillancourt also decisively overstates the commanding role of the center vis-à-vis national church settings. He is surely too centered on Europe and Italy, whatever the large merits of his thesis that much of papal power has been about Italian politics. Clearly, Catholic Action—to take one example—had quite different contours in the Netherlands, Belgium and France than in Italy. Most damaging, in my opinion, is Vaillancourt's total neglect of the evidence for a shift in Vatican policy on political involvement since 1971 in response to "the coming of the third church." Vaillancourt has grossly overstated his case in respect to social Catholicism, although his evidence is strongly persuasive on the issue of Vatican manipulation and control of lay elites.

The chosen Neo-Marxist perspective, legitimate and illuminating in itself, foreshortens Vaillancourt's vision so that he misses important aspects of social Catholicism which are not, simply, ideology. His is only a partial truth. But anyone who desires to give an alternative account of worldwide social Catholicism and the involvement of the laity in church decision-making (the attempt to block effective lay involvement is the single most important cause of the failure of social Catholicism to become anything more than a beautiful, if ineffective, vision) will have to include Vaillancourt's perspective and his—to any social scientist—rather obvious assertion: "The use of power in a religious organization like the Catholic church is determined in good part by political and socio-economic pressures as they are mediated through the ideology and the interests of the top leadership and especially the central bureaucracy of that organization." The merit of this book is that it is unique in the sociology of religion for systematically exploring those political and socio-economic pressures on the Roman curia and their consequences for social policy vis-à-vis church-sponsored lay movements in the world church. I suspect that greater nuance will not totally invalidate the general thrust of Vaillancourt's strong and compelling thesis.

Since the Vatican gives the laity statuses that are tentative and limited in time (and dependent for their perpetuation on the "good conduct" of the incumbent), laymen who keep waiting to be in a secure position to speak out never get to that position because the Vatican does not permit such an occurrence to come about. Those who nevertheless do speak out lose their legitimacy, since they are immediately removed from office or, if that is impossible, their organization is isolated and stripped of all official standing. Jean-Guy Vaillancourt
Papal Power

The revelation of the landscape

NATURE AND CULTURE
AMERICAN LANDSCAPE AND PAINTING, 1825-1875

Barbara Novak

Oxford University, $35, 323 pp.

Nicolaus Mills

"IN the early nineteenth century in America, nature couldn't do without God, and God apparently couldn't do without nature." So writes Barbara Novak in the opening sentence of her *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825-1875*, and what follows is the best book to date on the coming of age of American art. Novak has done for America's seminal landscape artists what F. O. Matthiessen did forty years ago in his *American Renaissance* for a similar group of American writers—set the terms on which their work will be debated and judged.

Novak's starting point is not with the artists themselves but with the context in which their work flourished. Especially in her opening chapters she is attuned to the fact that in a country without a past nature worship was a substitute for a reliance on history. As virgin land, nature provided America with what Europe with its cities and overcultivated countryside lacked: a timeless vision of God's creation. As long as there was wilderness, Americans could point to the superiority of their country, and an artist such as Thomas Cole could insist, "We are still in Eden; the wall that shuts us out of the garden is our own ignorance and folly."

For Cole and the landscape artists who came after him, it was not, however, enough to acknowledge that nature was, as William Sidney Mount observed, "a lecture always ready and bound by the Almighty." The task of the artist was to make sure that "the volume of nature" was rightly understood, and it was at this point that American artists departed radically from their European contemporaries who believed, "Nature is only the pretext. Art is the goal passing through the individual." For the American artist, only the reverse could be true. He knew that technique per se could not make him great or be an end in itself. The point of his art was to capture the sublime in nature, and to do this, he had to go beyond his private vision. It is Emerson's vision of the artist as medium, as a "transparent eyeball" who becomes "part or particle of God" as the "currents of the Universal Being" circulate through him that captures the spirit of the landscape artists Novak describes.

The consequence of this for Novak is

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an American tradition in which the aim of the artist is not only to reveal God in nature but to instruct the viewer on how nature should be seen. In *Nature and Culture* the path that leads from the Biblical iconography of Thomas Cole's work, to the spectacular sunsets of Frederic Church, to the limpid calm of the luminist paintings of Martin Johnson Heade is an unbroken trail despite its aesthetic twists and turns. The quietism of Heade's Newbury marsh series of the 1860s and 1870s is not a religious falling off from the apocalyptic quality of Cole's 1836 series, *The Course of Empire*, where light is as dramatic and pointed as the finger of God. In both cases the aim is — to quote from Asher Durand's "Letters and Landscape Painting" — to fill the observer with the kind of "right-minded, reverent feeling" that will let him appreciate "the Grand Designer." What has changed is merely the kind of lesson the theological climate will allow.

How original is such a landscape tradition? For Novak this is a question that cannot be avoided, and she devotes the last quarter of *Nature and Culture* to providing what is so often missing from synoptic studies of American culture: a sense of its relationship to Europe. Novak is scrupulous about tracing the parallels between American and European art. She provides us with long sections on Claude Lorrain and the Hudson River School, seventeenth-century Dutch seascapes and American marine painting, Caspar Freidrich and American luminism. What she omits — for example, the debt Thomas Cole owed to the religious paintings of his English contemporary, John Martin — is specific rather than generic and does nothing to diminish the cultural flow she is intent on tracing.

The result is that in the end *Nature and Culture* provides us with a telling picture of the way in which American painters took their European inheritance and changed it to fit the new world. It is a picture that, to be sure, undercuts any inflated notion of the uniqueness of American art, but it is by no means a reductive picture. It says as much about the originality as the borrowings of American art, and above all, it explains why nineteenth-century American artists so steadfastly resisted French impressionism with its emphasis on the genius of the artists rather than the magnificence of the "Grand Designer."

Indeed, for the artists Novak describes the real attack on their work came not from Europe but from the growth of their own country. Within their lifetimes the land they had devoted themselves to depicting began to be savaged. The "ravages of the axe are daily increasing — the most noble scenes are made desolate, and often times with a wantonness and barbarism scarcely credible in a civilized nation," Thomas Cole complained in his 1835 "Essay on American Scenery," but by mid-nineteenth century, it was a complaint that the country as a whole was unwilling to listen to. Even a romantic such as Walt Whitman would in his 1856 "Song of the Broad-Axe" celebrate the axe as the harbinger of the new shapes of democracy, and by the late 1880s, the shift in American tastes was complete. The new patrons of American art were not interested in a landscape tradition that had so little to do with success and power and so much to say about the wilderness and the immanence of God.

Should we trust a cuddly novelist?

STILL LIFE WITH WOODPECKER
Tom Robbins
Bantam, $6.95, 288 pp.

Frank McConnell

IF Thomas Pynchon were a Muppet, he would write like Tom Robbins.

That may be, indeed, a large part of the problem in reading Robbins. He's so *cute*: his books are full of cute lines populated by unrelentingly cute people, even teeming with cute animals—frogs, chipmunks, and chihuahuas in *Still Life With Woodpecker*. No one ever gets hurt very badly (only one chihuahua dies a violent death in *Still Life*); and although the world is threatened by the same dark, soulless business cartels that threaten the worlds of Pynchon, Mailer, and our century, in Robbins it doesn't seem, finally, to matter. Love or something like it really does conquer all in his parables, with a mixture of stoned gaiety, positive thinking, and Sunday Supplement Taoism. "I believe in everything; nothing is sacred," declares our author at the end of *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* (1976). "I believe in nothing; everything is sacred. Ha ha ho ho and hee hee." Yoda couldn't have put it better.

But these are harsh words for a writer who is, undoubtedly, *the* underground undergraduate enthusiasm of the seventies. Robbins has published three novels, *Another Roadside Attraction* in 1972, *Cowgirls*, and now *Still Life*. And *Cowgirls*—now being filmed—with a minimum of the hype and hysteria lavished on, say, *The World According to Garp*, has already become a phenomenal word-of-mouth moneymaker.

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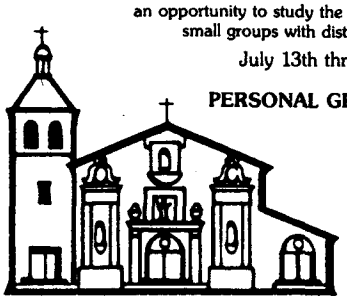

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Furthermore, writers as reticent as Graham Greene and as reticent as Pynchon himself have expressed high praise for his work. And (dammit, let's be honest) Robbins *is*, as a storyteller, as engaging and as fun to read, as *cuddly*, as anybody currently working at the trade.

But should we trust a cuddly novelist? The last twenty or so years of American fiction have taught us that comedy, satire, the absurd are all powerful tools for mapping the shape of the apocalypse upon whose edge we tremble. But how can we handle a writer who is comic, satiric, absurdist—but not at all apocalyptic? Cheerful, even?

His novels, laced with deliberately dopey puns, goofy digressions, and half-mixed metaphors, are virtually plotless. But not quite. "Nothing is implied here," he writes in *Still Life*, at the end of a digression on banyan trees, Thomas Jefferson, figs, and red hair. "Except the possibility that everything is connected." Users of pharmaceutical consciousness-raisers, from cannabis to distilled malt, will of course recognize that state of mind in which everything does seem magically connected—the "oh, wow!" state of happy and temporary satori. Robbins, however, does not simply echo "oh, wow": he writes books, and that makes all the difference.

In *Another Roadside Attraction*, an itinerant magician and his luscious, promiscuous lady discover that the corpse of Christ has been hidden in the caves of the Vatican, a refutation of the myths of Christianity and a validation of the ancient, erotic magic our hero and heroine believe in. In *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*, the beautiful heroine, Sissy Hankshaw (cursed or blessed with incredibly outsize thumbs—so she becomes a hitchhiker) discovers the liberated life of an all-cowgirl, revolutionary feminist ranch in the Dakotas, and incidentally meets a Japanese-American savant (the "Chink") who has discovered the secret of the ancient, pre-Christian Western religion. And in *Still Life With Woodpecker* the Princess Leigh-Cheri, ecologically-minded daughter of deposed European monarchs living in Washington State, meets, falls in love with, and eventually saves the Woodpecker, an anarchist and dynamiter who may also be, like the Princess herself, the marooned child of superconscious extraterrestrial redhead outlaws.

By now there is something almost too familiar about this fare: refried Gnosticism, twice-baked existentialism, and parboiled science fiction have all but lost their tang for us, we have had it so often. But that is almost the point of Robbins's novels. A "second-generation postmodernist" (such are the absurdities spawned by literary-critical jargon), a man for whom Pynchon, Barth, Mailer, Vonnegut et al. are elder statesmen, Robbins seems determined, at whatever cost, to reassert the fact that writing and reading fiction is fun: and, even more daringly, that fun itself is—well, fun.

Early in *Still Life*, the Princess imagines what may well be the epigraph for all Robbins's fiction:

> "Fairy tales and myths are dominated by accounts of rescued princesses," she reasoned. "Isn't it about time that a princess returned the favor?" Leigh-Cheri had a vision of the princess as hero.

To be sure, this variety of feminism itself would or should offend many feminists: it assumes that our inherited ideas of "male" and "female" roles is not wrong, but has just been misapplied. But, again, that is his point.

I have said that the plots of his novels are all fairly uncomplicated: a heroine discovers an ancient wisdom that validates her own mystic sensibility and proceeds to save the world (or part of the world) with it. But that is a distortion. In each of his novels there is also an important subplot (para-plot? hyper-plot?) in which the narrator himself, a definitively masculine and definitively confused writer, falls in love with his own heroine. In *Another Roadside Attraction* the implied and wished-for mating actually takes place; in *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* it may or may not occur after the last sentence in the book; in *Still Life With Woodpecker* it can never occur, just because the writer of fiction has finally admitted that he *is* a writer of fiction, that there is no way through his electric typewriter (a minor character in the novel) to the wonderfully sexy heroine he and the typewriter invent.

But in that distance between the rationalizing, distraught novelist and his wonderfully liberated creations lies Robbins's real strength and real brilliance. His stories insist that everything is all right, that everything rightly perceived is beautiful, is part of the Tao (the path, the way, the great lump—all translations work). But his *storytellers* incarnate his, and our, difficulty in accepting such a simple, pacific, happy gospel. So that the real plot of a Robbins novel is very like the real plot of our learning to trust his fiction.

This accounts also for his most common, and most distinctive, stylistic trick: the animation of the inanimate. Buildings, appliances, molecules, sexual organs—*anything* in his fiction apparently can, and surely will, be described as if it were alive, conscious, and lovable. During the long central section of *Still Life*, the Princess, isolated from her lover, reinvents her love and incidentally reinvents the history of civilization by contemplating that most banal artifact of advertising technology, a Camel pack. "Leigh-Cheri had come to consider the smallest, deadest thing as if it had some life of its own. . . . Her grip lingered on doorknobs much longer than necessary."

Cute, we might think. But beneath the cuteness is a very high seriousness, indeed: so serious that it refuses to take itself seriously. Leigh-Cheri's love for doorknobs not only inverts what may well be the moment of birth, in fiction, of the existentialist sensibility—the moment in Sartre's *Nausea* where Roquentin discovers the horrifying *otherness* of the world by grasping a doorknob—it also reverses, precisely, the direction of avant-garde American fiction prior to Robbins. In the world of Thomas Pynchon's stunning, paranoid fables we are all in danger of being reduced to the state of inanimacy, of flesh-and-blood robots, by the dark cartels who control our destiny. And in the world of Tom Robbins's grownup fairy tales, the world itself is on the verge of becoming as alive, as happy, and as loonily free as we think we ourselves might be in our best moments. The difference is only a matter of perception.

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Both Pynchon and Robbins, for all their hipness, derive ultimately from an immediately familiar and impossibly old tradition of storytelling, that of the stand-up comic by Dickens out of the Marx Brothers. The difference between them—and maybe the difference between their decades of origin—is that Pynchon's comedy is most like the corrosive, bitter punning of Groucho at his best and worst. While Robbins, in his carefully-achieved and carefully-constructed innocence, his delicate assertions that we have a right to be joyful, even in the midst of chaos, can remind us of no one as much as Harpo, that most beautiful, vulnerable, and unassailable of clowns.

Or of a Muppet, an artificial construction of styrofoam, sponge rubber, and imagination whose frantic antics convince us, at least for the moment, that gaiety and grace are our birthright on this planet. And, as one or any of Robbins's own characters might ask, what can be wrong with that?

More Carlislean than Marxian

TITO
THE STORY FROM INSIDE
Milovan Djilas
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $9.95, 185 pp.

Matthew Mestrovic

DURING an encounter I had with Djilas in Belgrade some ten years ago, he told me that in the immediate post-World War II period Tito did not wield absolute control in Yugoslavia. Decisions were made by a small inner circle of Communist leaders which included Tito, Djilas, Rankovic and Kardelj. Sometimes Tito was overruled by the unanimity of the others. "Acting together," Djilas told me, "we could have removed Tito."

Djilas did not say so explicitly, but I had the distinct feeling that after spending nine years in Tito's prisons for ideological heresy, he regretted that he had not been more cunning in the 1953 confrontation with Tito over the issue of the liberalization of Yugoslav society. Now, in his newest book, *Tito: The Story from Inside*, Djilas admits, "I lacked political sense. I lacked an instinct for subtle, gradual, far-reaching political strategy." And he lost!

Tito may have been a lackluster military commander. He was certainly a poor orator whose speeches were heavily edited before publication. He lacked formal education and his "knowledge of Marxism was meager." But he had a highly developed sense for politics and power. He had a "sense of danger and a strong will to live, to survive, and endure; a shrewd and insatiable drive for power."

This sense enabled Tito to survive Stalin's bloody purges of the 1930s and to go on to win power in Yugoslavia as the Moscow-chosen leader of the Yugoslav Communist party. The same sense enabled Tito to outsmart Churchill during the war and to successfully defy Stalin in 1948. Tito's reward was that he held power for thirty-five years until his death in May, 1980.

This is the quality, too, that enabled Tito to eliminate all of his most powerful political associates in the Yugoslav Communist movement, until he stood absolute and alone at the pinnacle of power.

First to go was the Croat Communist leader Andrija Hebrang who was murdered in prison in 1949, for the crime of "Croat nationalism." The next to go was Djilas. He was accused of liberal ideological heresy. Now, many years later, writing about his showdown with Tito, Djilas concludes that the confrontation had been inevitable since the beginning of their close association back in 1937: "I believe that from the very beginning Tito sensed in me an unyielding opponent," who had to be destroyed.

In 1966, it was the turn of Djilas's closest friend in Tito's inner circle, secret police chief Alexander Rankovic. He was charged with violations of "socialist legality," a euphemism for the arrest and liquidation without judicial procedure, and often on mere suspicion, of thousands of political enemies, real or imagined, of all political hues.

Of Tito's closest associates, only Edvard Kardelj survived in power till his death of cancer in 1979. He survived politically because he accepted a diminished and subservient relationship with Tito. I remember Tito speaking to Kardelj in my presence and that of other strangers as if he were a valet. And yet Kardelj was second ranking to Tito himself.

Not only did Tito eliminate all those who shared his power ("I made no friends," he once told Djilas), but he also got rid of all of the ablest second echelon Yugoslav Communist leaders, notably Leo Mates, Marko Nikezic, Vladimir Popovic, and others. All were, one by one, condemned by Tito to "political death," which he once told Djilas "is the most horrible death of all."

"Yugoslavia was too small for Tito," Djilas remarks at one point in the book. Tito resented Yugoslavia's smallness, its poverty, its military weakness, for they limited the scope of his talent. If only Tito had been the leader of the Soviet Union, Communist China, or the U.S.A., he could have been the ruler of the world. I had the same feeling of Tito's annoyance with Yugoslavia's smallness when I visited him on his favorite island of Vanga, near Brioni. He dismissed with a disdainful wave of his hand all praise of Yugoslavia's achievements. Only personal flattery delighted him. Then his laughter was hearty and true.

Some of Tito's successes were admittedly extraordinary. He was the first to shatter the monolithic unity of Communism under Kremlin leadership. Together with Nehru and Nasser he forged the nonaligned movement, gaining international stature beyond the strength, size, population and resources of the second-class Balkan country he ruled.

Ultimately Tito was an autocrat, concerned above all with his own power, fame, prestige, and majesty. His views concerning his own role in history were more Carlislean than Marxian. He told Djilas, obviously alluding to himself, "often the entire course of history de-

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pends on one person."

Though officially an atheist, Tito once rebuked Djilas for suggesting that physical death is final. "Who knows what it is all about anyway, who knows?" said he and cut short all further talk of death.

But what is Tito's legacy? What will endure of his glory and his fame? Djilas gives an oblique answer, "Absolute rulers last only as long as their power." Tito left behind him a collective leadership of mediocre bureaucrats to handle intractable problems of inflation, unemployment, a huge balance of payments deficit, and acrimonious national conflicts.

Djilas believes that Tito established the collective leadership so no one who came after him "would command such power as he held, no one could ever use it to blacken his memory." But the weak and undistinguished collective leadership has been forced to follow a nonpolicy of letting everything slide in Yugoslavia. No decisions are made so that clashes do not threaten to unhinge the collective leadership.

At least in this respect, Tito's heirs have done their homework. They know that "only if the top is disunited would such danger filter to the base foundation, the middle ranks and the people. It cannot be otherwise in a nondemocratic, one-party system."

Djilas wrote his judgment of Tito hastily during the months of Tito's agony and death. Much of the story was published in installments last summer in the West German weekly *Der Spiegel* under the title, *The Red King*. Djilas's account has the qualities and defects of a timely journalistic piece: it is immediate, anecdotal, gossipy, subjective, personal. It was written from memory and against a deadline.

The English translation, published by Djilas's friend and publisher William Jovanovich, was also done in a great hurry, in order to get the book into the bookstores as soon as possible, and it contains some errors of fact, mistranslations and incorrect dates.

Flawed as the book is in certain details, it is nevertheless extremely interesting and perceptive both of Tito's complex personality and his Machiavellian rule.

Tito may have relegated Djilas to "political death" twenty-seven years ago when he was dismissed from the Yugoslav politburo. But in the political wilderness, Djilas forged a new life for himself, which has already proven to be richer and more rewarding and which is likely to endure in time far better—the life of a political thinker, writer, and novelist of world stature.

Constitutional activist

THE COURT YEARS

William O. Douglas

Random House, $16.95, 434 pp.

INDEPENDENT JOURNEY

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS

James F. Simon

Harper & Row, $16.95, 503 pp.

Isidore Silver

Revolutions—including "constitutional" ones—often are characterized (perhaps symbolized) by individuals who represent what might be called those upheavals' "heart," "mind," and "fist." The Russian Revolution had its Lenin, Marx, and Trotsky (as founder of the Red Army) and the American Revolution's eminences were Jefferson, Adams, and Washington. Equivalent roles in the 1960s Warren Court "revolution" were played by the Chief Justice—"Yes, but is it fair?" was his enduring refrain when a governmental practice was at issue—and Hugo Black and William O. Douglas. While Black carefully crafted a constitutional philosophy that underlay significant expansions of the reach and meaning of the Bill of Rights, Douglas, as Simon notes, "went beyond Black with direct, incisive [intellectual] forays that cut through technical verbiage to the core issues" of the great controversies that remain, even in this dismal era, remarkable testaments to a spirit of liberty expounded by the Warren Court. Unfortunately, fists often flail as hit; the autobiography—if such it can be called—often demonstrates the former while the biography ably depicts the latter.

Of course, the categories of revolutionary symbolism enumerated above are not exclusive, for Douglas (as, for instance, Jefferson) was simply too brilliant and restless a soul to be easily confined to the scholar's pigeonhole. At times Douglas's (rare) intellectual leadership on the Court went unrecognized, even by himself. For instance, Simon's acknowledgement that *Griswold* v *Connecticut* was "one of the most important Constitutional decisions of the twentieth century" is counterpointed by Douglas's startling failure to even mention that case or the "right to privacy" it enunciated. Perhaps the decision was personally painful, since it compelled his great ally, Black, to dissent, but, whatever the reason, it is apparent that Douglas was simply not interested—in his valedictory—in describing his "role" on the Court during the tumultuous thirty-six years of his service.

Indeed, there can be little doubt that the second volume of his autobiography is meant as little more than a legacy, complete with moral lessons and admonitions about freedom and democracy (and their precarious states) rather than a true biography. The book is a fertile, rambling, topic-oriented (rather than chronological) chronicle of his loves, hates, and fears, an often meandering combination of "Ulysses" and Parson Weems. Simon catalogues the Justice and the man, "warts and all" (indeed, one section is called "The Opportunist"), while Douglas is preaching and cautioning. Accuracy thus becomes the hallmark of the first estimable effort, while rectitude is the theme of the second. While righteousness need not preclude fidelity to truth, it often severely qualifies it—and the biography should be taken "at wholesale" (it is broadly true) while Simon's work is accurate on the retail level.

The terms "wholesale" and "retail," incidentally, were used by Oliver Wendell Holmes—and later, by Felix Frankfurter—to describe the roles of the legislature and courts in "making" law.

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In general, these jurists believed that Congress (and state legislatures) had the Constitutional authority to make laws and that courts (including the Supreme Court) should "legislate" only by filling in the gaps not explicitly covered by the broad language of statutes. Douglas agreed that deference should be paid to legislative enactments in economic matters, but decried judicial passivity in the face of legal attacks on civil liberties and rights. In those realms, he fervently believed, the roles of the different branches of government should be reversed. Inevitably, this engendered a major, continuing conflict with Frankfurter, a dispute now largely resolved in Douglas's favor, but one which embittered the two men. Ironically, Douglas's negative assessment of his chief rival on the Court stands in marked contrast to his benign feelings about other judicial conservatives, including the notorious "four horsemen" who bitterly opposed most New Deal legislation. The difference in treatment of the "Frankfurter issue" between Douglas and Simon strikingly reflects the differences between the two books.

Douglas's distate for Frankfurter is almost unmitigated and leads to a glaring error. Most accounts of *Brown* v *Board of Education* (including Simon's sketchy treatment) emphasize Frankfurter's central role in moving toward the unanimous ruling that school segregation was unconstitutional. Douglas contends that "Frankfurter's view was that it was not unconstitutional to treat a Negro differently from a white but that the cases should be re-argued" and that he offhandedly accepted Earl Warren's analysis only because Warren had been a politician so "why should a professor object?" This slight is matched by the sin of omission about another critical matter, the Rosenberg case. In contrast to Douglas's self-serving hagiography, the true hero of that lamentable affair was Frankfurter who was resolute in his desire to review their convictions; Douglas refused to cast a decisive vote to hear parts of the case (only parts came up for technical reasons after the Court at first denied review of the trial). Although, at the end, Douglas was heroic, Simon is right in arguing that "there was something profoundly unsettling" about his behavior prior to that.

Simon suggests that there were deeper roots to the rivalry. "Though neither admitted it, Frankfurter and Douglas competed for influence with FDR after their appointments." Douglas's derisive comments about Frankfurter's "feeling of inadequacy" and his "longing to be accepted" are ironic projections of Douglas's own "uncanny ability to poke fun at authority one minute and court that same authority the next," as Simon sympathetically observes. "Projection" was not Douglas's only defense mechanism—"denial" in the form of a refusal to admit to *any* political ambitions during the Court years, to other forms of "relentless ambition" during his career, and to acknowledgement of aid by others, including his first wife, is strong.

Of course, his great rival was not free of delusions either. If Douglas could accurately note, though uncharitably characterize as "duplicitous", Frankfurter's pouring of "emotions . . . into decisions, while professing just the opposite," Simon could dispassionately observe that "Douglas believed, with considerable justification, that Frankfurter went to extraordinary lengths to perpetuate his political and judicial philosophies." Both men were remarkable, not only for their intellect but for their powers of rationalization of their own actions and attribution of malevolence to their enemies.

Despite the warts—and they are numerous (especially in his personal life, not a word of which is mentioned by Douglas)—this son of a Presbyterian preacher was a titanic, even seminal figure, not only as judge, but as political analyst without portfolio. As Simon notes, "And as he was to show later in Vietnam, Douglas exhibited a remarkable, almost prophetic capacity to pinpoint the weaknesses of U.S. foreign policy." Even on the Court he was in the maelstrom of events ("It seemed to me that I had hardly reached the Court when people were trying to get me off")—as sometime teacher of Jack and Bobby Kennedy, as dedicated environmentalist, and as occasonal victim of Richard Nixon's fury. He remains contemporary, as his comments about Iran and Ronald Reagan demonstrate. Although Simon's judgment about *Go East, Young Man*, the first volume of the Justice's opus—"It was not a modest book. Nor was it entirely candid"—is true of much of the second, Douglas's journey was indeed largely independent, always fascinating, always instructive. His greatness is not diminished but enhanced by the known truths of what was, after all, a remarkable and productive—and, let us hope influential—life. Although this "driven introvert" and "intensely private man" "was not writing for the *Harvard Law Review*," (Simon) neither was he "the one Justice in the long history of the Court never to proselytize (Douglas). His thirty-one books—addressed to the nation—set forth a liberal agenda which has not yet come close to being fulfilled.

REVIEWERS

FATHER JOHN A. COLEMAN, S.J., *is a Fellow of The Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C.*

NICOLAUS MILLS, *author of* The Great School Bus Controversy *(Teacher's College Press), writes frequently on art for* Commonweal.

MATTHEW MESTROVIC *teaches at Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey.*

FRANK McCONNELL's *most recent book is* The Science Fiction of H.G. Wells *(Oxford).*

ISIDORE SILVER *teaches constitutional law and history at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City.*

Correspondence

(Continued from page 130)

[are] merely [components] [of] a different life-style, or is there something inherently wrong with it?"

The facts of biology buttress the contention that heterosexuality is prescriptively natural and normal and that homosexuality is prescriptively unnatural and abnormal. For example: Male and female sex organs complement each other; the bodies of a man and a woman seem designed for union with one another. Clearly, it would be a mistake to argue from biological fact to "what

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ought to be," that is, from "is" to "ought"; but certainly, the facts of biology lend much credence to the view that heterosexuality — and not homosexuality — is natural and normal (both prescriptively and descriptively).

Those who mistakenly contend that homosexuality is natural and normal fail to make significant and much needed distinctions: The distinctions between descriptive and prescriptive normality, between (what Emerson termed) "the law for man" and "the law for thing," between human beings and mere animals.

HAVEN BRADFORD GOW

Mount Rainier, Md.

To the Editors: A few comments and some questions about Edward Vacek's excellent introduction to a complex topic ["A Christian Homosexuality?", Dec. 5]:

1. "Cure rates" of whatever percentage usually, if not always, refer to a change in *behavior* and not to that inner source of personal identity which many gay people experience from their sexual orientation.

2. Is it correct to use the "complementarity" (biological-psychological) argument to interpret the idea of being created in God's image or is it not really the other way around: we use the idea of being created in the image of God to interpret the relationships among women and men and their offspring including homosexual people? For Christians the image of God is fully revealed in Jesus Christ who as we know was neither married nor produced biological offspring.

3. Does the task of propagating the human race fall upon each and every member or upon the race as a whole? If the latter then homosexual people, celibates and others who do not propagate can hardly be faulted for not bearing children. I find the argument about homosexual acts being "deficient" because they are not open to generation as strong as similar arguments against contraceptive heterosexual intercourse, and I suspect that part of the reason many are uncomfortable about any change in church doctrine in this area is precisely because it would force us to re-evaluate our attitudes on homosexual actions.

4. Does not the fact that some homosexual couples make love "more humanely," as Vacek states, because of better communication and empathy for the other's feelings say something about the traditional male-female psychic complementarity argument against such relationships?

5. I sense some contradictions in Vacek's discussion of gay spirituality. On the one hand he says that heterosexuals relate to the world through their heterosexual identity which affects their spirituality and on the other hand that gay spirituality is basically like that of heterosexuals! Does not a homosexual orientation of a person also affect that person's world view, perceptions, and spirituality?

6. It is difficult to imagine that only *some* homosexual people are called to a personal vocation of genital non-activity because they do not wish to act contrary to certain explicit statements of Scripture and tradition. Would not every Christian be called to a similar vocation? The call to chastity-celibacy for a gay person must come from much different motives and there are those who feel so called. For the vast majority, however, other viable options seem necessary.

REV. ROBERT NUGENT, SDS
Co-director
New Ways Ministry

Olyphant, Pa.

To the Editors: As I read the title of "A Christian Homosexuality?" [Dec. 5], I ask myself, can we look forward to future articles in *Commonweal* with titles such as "A Christian Rapist?", "A Christian Murderer?", "A Christian Adulterer?", "A Christian Fornicator?", "A Christian Dope Peddler?" We Christians must feel that we are very charitable for demonstrating such great love that we can now support all these various sins. What is difficult to understand, is why Christ failed to practice a similar type of charity in dealing with the matter of sin.

Reflecting upon the article in its entirety, it would remind one of a discussion held by a group of thirteen-year-old boys arguing as to what cowboy was the fastest draw in the West: many arguments but no conclusions.

I have read the Bible from cover to cover on at least two different occasions and have not found anything in it to support the validity of sexual relations except in the case of men and women married to each other. The author of this article acknowledges that both Scripture and Tradition condemn active homosexuality. I assume that he rejects both Scripture and Tradition in favor of his own private convictions.

The author states "the major question is whether they (homosexuals) should be bound to act as heterosexuals." Following this line of reasoning, I might ask should an inveterate liar be required to tell the truth? Should a sadistic rapist be required to engage in sex with a consenting partner? Should a murderer refrain from taking a life when his strong inclination is to do so? . . .

It is becoming increasingly clear that those who consider themselves Catholics but who consistently preach doctrines that are contrary to the teachings of the pope, never allude to sin or hell. Presumably, when they assume complete control of the situation both sin and hell will become dead issues and since their authority is so great God will have no alternative but to concur. The final statement in the article concludes with "it will always be Christianly clear that we should love our homosexual sisters and brothers." The author should have stated as well that it would be equally Christianly clear that we should hate the sins committed by homosexuals in the same way that we hate the sins committed by

CORRECTION

The following book should have been included in the Human Family Book List of February 27.

Cornrows, *by Camille Yarbrough. Illustrated by Carole Bayard. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1979. $7.95.*

Impressive drawings accompany a text which places this distinctive hairstyle into an historical perspective. Tracing its origin back to various African nations, the author describes the possible meanings of the different patterns in the braiding. In the picture book format, the reader may share with the child portrayed in the text a bit of African lore. (All ages)

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adulterers, murderers, thieves, etc. Apparently, the author has overlooked this fact. . . .

JAMES J. CLAUSS

The author replies:

I am grateful for all the comments I have received, those above and those sent directly to me. I was aware when I wrote the essay that I would be hit from the right and the left. I also hoped—a hope that many confirmed—that such an essay would dissipate the impression that the church is a repressive and unintelligible defender of a hostile attitude towards homosexuals.

In their own fashion, Nugent and others restate (perhaps more clearly?) many of the same points I thought I was making. I am glad for the agreement.

Nugent's comment that we should take our cue from an "image of God" theology is one that I welcome. I doubt, however, that the image of a celibate Jesus or a bodiless God can provide *direct* help in deciding about the morality of either homosexual or heterosexual activity. These images can tell us *how* we should act (lovingly, creatively, faithfully, etc.), but not whether one or other form of sexual activity reflects God. In this connection I agree with Gow that we cannot go from biology to an "ought," but that the "ought" should take account of biology.

Clauss's comments point to one of the fundamental debates raging in moral theology today. Here only a few words. *If* homosexual activity is immoral, then no amount of "good reasons," scripture or tradition is going to make it right. Today people are questioning Clauss's *assumption*. We can prove that rape and murder are wrong. Can we do so in this matter?

I confess to being a "traditional" Catholic in the heavy use I make of reason. My Protestant sisters and brothers remind me frequently of the sin-corrupted character of reason. Accordingly, my conclusions are put forward tentatively. Nonetheless, I rely on a Catholic hope that reason can be grace-filled and so is not as exclaustrated from faith as some of my critics seem to imply.

The exact relation between reason and scripture-tradition-authority is, as everyone knows, complex and controverted. At various points in our long history these latter sources have been used to defend slavery, demand observance of the Saturday Sabbath, resist use of civil courts, prevent autopsies, forbid being a soldier, condemn evolution, burn heretics, restrict scriptural studies, subordinate women, and so forth. Each of these practices came to be called into question. Currently the same is being done with regard to the morality of homosexual activity. I propose that the scriptures and tradition weigh heavily against homosexual activity, but I do not think that these sources necessarily close the question. In some significant ways we understand sexuality, social history and vocation differently, if not better, than our forebears. These changes seem to imply that we need freshly look at the dilemmas Christian homosexuals face.

(REV.) EDWARD VACEK, S.J.

Church/world watch

(Continued from page 135)

perspective concerns the use of nuclear weapons. In the religious debate, a strong and solid consensus has formed against any use of nuclear weapons however limited. The secular debate is marked by Professor Richard Pipes's reflections, again in *Commentary*, on "Why the Soviets Think They Can Fight and Win a Nuclear War." Such themes lead in turn to Richard Burt's comment that the stagnation of the SALT process "provides an opportunity for unfettered thinking about American nuclear options during the coming decade and beyond. The opportunity should be exploited." Messrs. Pipes and Burt now hold significant positions in the Reagan administration. The point here is not to say that their views go uncontested or are in control of the secular debate, but to point out that the very strength of the religious consensus against the use of nuclear weapons may shield us from seeing that the view is being challenged in powerful terms.

Whether one finds the disjunction of the religious and secular debates a reassuring sign that the churches have not been co-opted or a disturbing sign of a blind spot in the religious approach to political questions, the distance between the debates should at least be noted. The determination of what to do about the gap — if anything — will rest on how one sees the role of the church, how one relates moral arguments to technical data, and how one interprets religious effectiveness in the political arena.

J. BRYAN HEHIR

(Father J. Bryan Hehir is Associate Secretary for International Justice and Peace at the United States Catholic Conference in Washington and a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston.)

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Trinity College, Burlington, Vt. 05401, June 21-26. Raymond Brown; Theodor Gaster; Alice Laffey; Gerald O'Collins. Write: Director.

G. K. Chesterton Conference

Saturday, April 25, 1981—Write Box 149, College at Lincoln Center, Fordham University, New York 10023.

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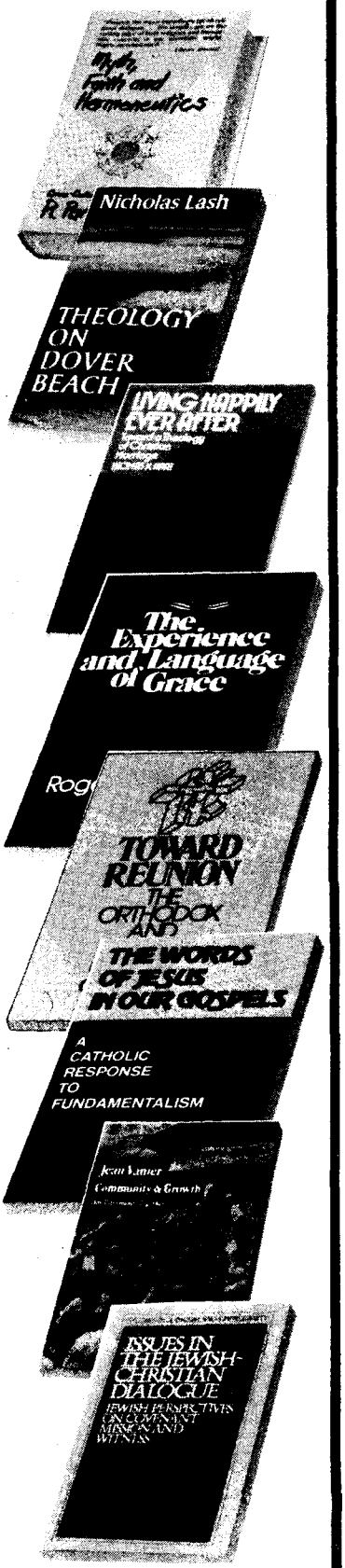
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